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Mission to free trapped monitors

SAS ready for rescue in Kosovo

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE EDITOR

A SUBSTANTIAL force of SAS troops is on alert to mount a "high risk" rescue operation in Kosovo if any unarmoured international monitors in the Yugoslav province are taken hostage.

The decision to enlist the SAS for hostage-rescue in Kosovo came after Brigadier-General Marcel Valentin, the French commander of Nato's extraction force based in the neighbouring Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, said his 2,300 soldiers would be incapable of carrying out such a specialist operation.

The Government has given its approval for a proposed Nato special forces unit, "several hundred strong", to be led by a senior British officer, and the bulk of the force is to be provided by the SAS, although other countries can contribute if required when an emergency arises.

The SAS sent more than 300 troops to the Gulf War in 1991, but this new operation is expected to be the largest formation of Special Air Service soldiers for a hostage-rescue mission. The hostage-rescue expertise of the Herford-based SAS is renowned throughout the world, especially after the 1980 Iranian Embassy siege.

If groups of Kosovo-based verifiers from the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) were to be taken hostage either by Serb forces or Kosovo Liberation Army guerrillas, the SAS

would be flown to the region to prepare for a rescue.

The OSCE team is currently 750-strong but is building up to a total of 2,000 personnel, many of them military or ex-military. Britain is providing 200.

Although the present Nato extraction force is based in Macedonia, permission has not yet been sought from the Government in Skopje for any further deployments of Nato troops in Macedonian territory. However, it remains the most likely base for a rescue operation.

When Nato began planning late last year for an extraction force to be based in Macedonia, it was always envisaged that a special forces team would be needed if hostages were taken.

Nato sources said that the French-led force, originally to be 1,800-strong but now expanded to 2,300, was never going to be suitably equipped for mounting any operation in a really hostile environment.

The sources said it was planned to be a force that could go over the border to evacuate the OSCE verifiers in a "hostile environment" and "carry out medical evacuations". The force is equipped with helicopters and armoured vehicles.

The structure and mandate for the extraction unit was also supposed to provide reassurance to President Milosevic, the Yugoslav leader, that Nato

was not building an invasion force, alliance sources said.

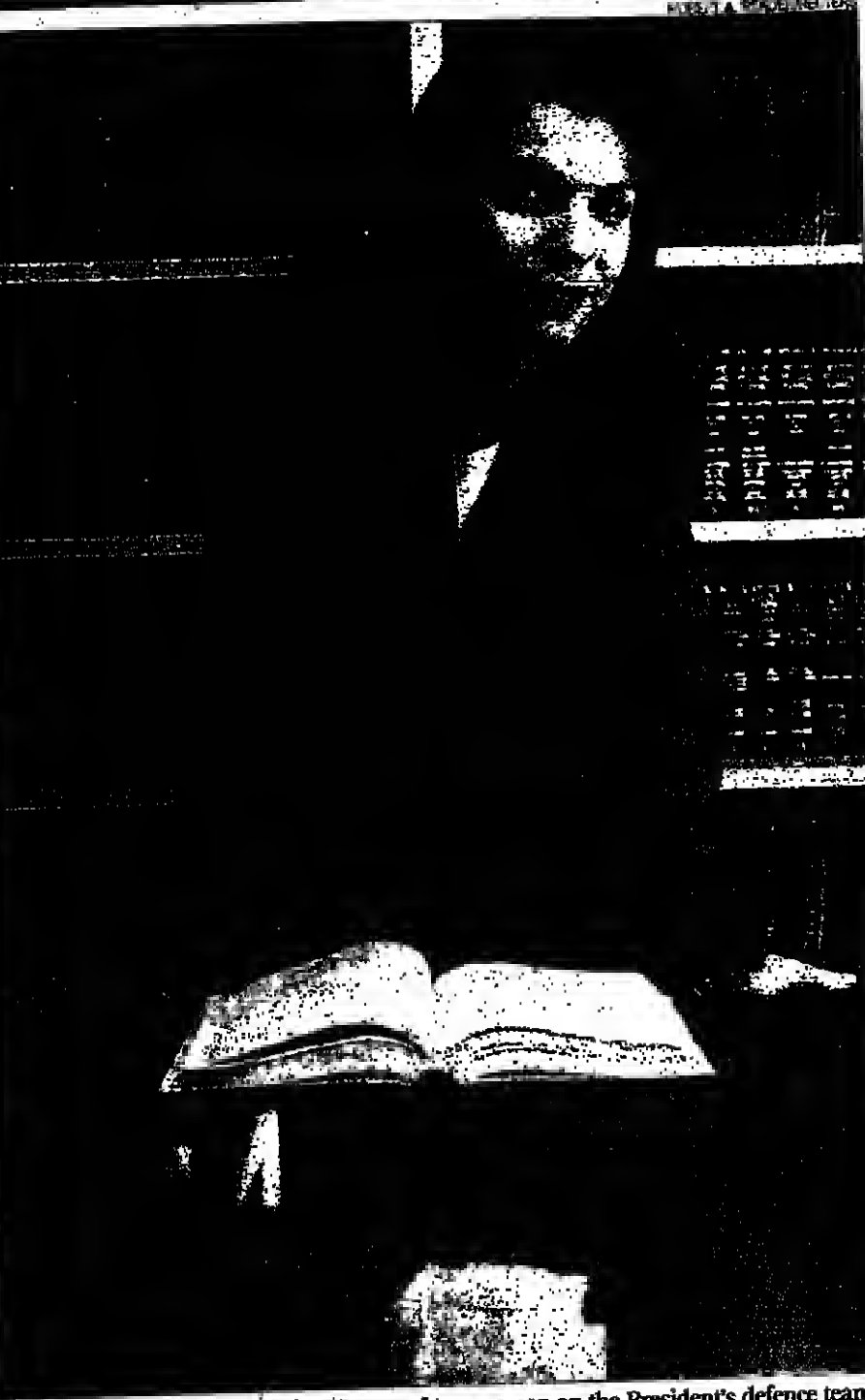
However, since the massacre of the 45 Albanians by Serb forces, Nato has had to bring forward plans for two other potential military operations.

Apart from the special forces' hostage-rescue team, a third tier is now under consideration which would involve the deployment of between 8,000 and 10,000 Nato troops, including British, to evacuate the whole OSCE verification team from Kosovo if there is all-out war. Nato sources said the large force "would be backed by artillery and ground support aircraft".

If Nato Governments decide to launch airstrikes to punish Belgrade for the weekend massacre, it is likely that the OSCE verifiers would be told to leave. In the event of any violent opposition to their withdrawal, Nato would have to decide how to guarantee their safety, General Wesley Clark, Nato's supreme allied commander Europe, who met Mr Milosevic in Belgrade yesterday, is expected to brief the North Atlantic Council in Brussels this week on the three-tier proposals.

In the Commons yesterday, Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said that British aircraft could be mobilised within days should Nato decide to mount airstrikes.

Belgrade warned, page 13
Simon Jenkins, page 18



Secret weapon: Nicole Seligman is one of two women on the President's defence team

Clinton's Ally McBeal takes on the Senators

FROM DAMIAN WHITWORTH IN WASHINGTON

SHE has been dubbed President Clinton's secret weapon. An attractive, high-powered lawyer who will blow away the grey-haired men bent on removing him from office.

As the White House began its defence of Mr Clinton in the impeachment trial last night, the woman nicknamed his Ally McBeal was waiting in the wings.

Nicole Seligman, 42, is one of two women lawyers expected to provide a marked contrast with the 13 Republican prosecutors who presented the case against Mr Clinton. The other, Cheryl Mills, is a brilliant black lawyer who joined Mr Clinton's legal team when he entered the White House.

In reality, depicting Ms Seligman as a real-life Ally McBeal is not entirely accurate. Her attractive looks are matched by an incisive legal brain, but she is far more devastatingly ruthless in court than the television character.

George Stephanopoulos, Mr Clinton's former spokesman, coined the "secret weapon" tag and other Clinton advisers have said they are in awe of her talents. "There's velvet on the outside and there's hard rock on the inside," said Lanny Davis, a former White House lawyer. "She can be tough and yet she can turn very charming and feminine,

which takes a witness by surprise. So if she doesn't get them one way, she'll get them another," said Brendan Sullivan, who led Oliver North's defence team during the Iran-Contra scandal. Ms Seligman helped to defend Mr North — and in the courtroom was mistaken for his daughter by some commentators. A graduate of Harvard Law School whose best friend is President Kennedy's daughter Caroline Kennedy, she edited the prestigious *Harvard Review* and worked briefly for the *Wall Street Journal* before a stint at the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court.

She then joined Williams & Connolly, where she teamed up with David Kendall, Mr Clinton's chief personal lawyer.

Ms Seligman has worked repeatedly for Mrs Clinton during the Whitewater investigations and for most of last year was working on the Monica Lewinsky affair. She was the only woman present when Mr Clinton gave his Grand Jury testimony via closed circuit television in the White House.

Although Charles Ruff, the chief White House lawyer and a veteran of the Watergate prosecution, opened the defence yesterday, Ms Seligman is expected to play a key role in proceedings. Ms Mills, 33, who knows the Clinton regime

inside out and has been another force behind the scenes, is also expected to take a central role in the Senate chamber, perhaps outlining Mr Clinton's version of events surrounding the retrieval of gifts he had given to Ms Lewinsky.

As the White House tried to assemble a bigger team for a defence presentation — that could take up to the 24 hours allotted, it suffered one setback when Rick Boucher, a Democratic representative, said that he was not available to help. Former Senate majority leader George Mitchell, the chairman of the Northern Ireland peace process, was also mentioned as one who would try to convince the 100 Senators not to convict Mr Clinton on the two articles of impeachment.

The defence strategy is to attack the facts in the prosecution case and insist that even if those facts are true, they do not justify his removal from office because the offences do not rise to the level of "treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanours", the constitutional standard for impeachment and conviction.

Fresh polls yesterday showed that 61 per cent of Americans thought Mr Clinton should not be convicted, while his approval rating remained at 69 per cent.

Prison on cards for Aitken after he admits libel case perjury

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

JONATHAN AITKEN, the former Conservative Cabinet minister, yesterday faced the threat of a lengthy prison sentence after admitting at the Central Criminal Court charges of perjury and perverting the course of justice.

The disgraced former Tory high-flyer confessed to drawing up a false witness statement which he persuaded his teenage daughter, Victoria, to sign to support his lies during his unsuccessful High Court libel action against *The Guardian* and Granada TV.

His civil action in June 1997 centred on the allegation by the newspaper and the TV company that he had stayed at the Ritz Hotel in Paris in 1993 at the expense of prominent Saudi Arabian friends while serving as Minister for Defence Procurement.

Aitken, 56, will be sentenced in June at the conclusion of the trial of his co-defendant and former business associate Said Ayas.

For acts intended to pervert the course of justice, the maximum sentence is life and, for perjury, up to seven years.

Said Ayas has yet to enter pleas to charges of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice, and doing as tending and intended to pervert the course of justice.

Aitken, of Lord North Street, Westminster, central London, denied two further charges — alleging conspiracy with his ex-wife Leticia and Said Ayas to pervert the course of justice, and doing acts tending and intended to pervert the course of justice.

Crown counsel David Waters accepted those not guilty pleas and the Recorder of London Michael Hyam ordered the two counts to lie on file.

Aitken, who arrived at the



Aitken: will not know his fate until June

Old Bailey with his mother, Lady Aitken, served under John Major, first as Defence Procurement Minister and then as First Secretary to the Treasury, which post he resigned to fight his libel action. When the action collapsed, he was left with a £2 million legal bill.

Aitken, who lost his seat as Tory MP for Thanet, Kent, at the general election, was divorced last year from his wife by whom he has twin daughters.

Continued on Page 4, col 5



"Cheer up — it's not nearly as bad as Jonathan Aitken's"

England are back inside

England were readmitted to the Five Nations rugby union championship less than 24 hours after being expelled from the competition over a television deal. Their opening match against Scotland will go ahead as planned on February 20. Page 44

Bae accused

British Aerospace was said to have damaged European cooperation by its £7 billion merger with GEC's Marconi Electronic Systems. Page 23

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Public to choose 'people's peers'

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND JAMES LANDALE

THE public is to be given the power to nominate "people's peers" under proposals published today to scrap the rights of hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords.

People will be able to write to the new independent appointments commission which will choose crossbench peers for the interim House of Lords once hereditary peers are banished to the shires.

Tony Blair has decided that the practice of allowing the public to nominate people for honours in the twice-yearly lists should be extended.

The "people's lords" will be those chosen by the commission in addition to peers nominated by political parties. Mr Blair is to give up his power to veto the names put forward by other parties although he will keep the right to say how many should come from each.

The death knell will sound today for the 750 hereditary peers when the Bill abolishing

their voting powers and a White Paper setting up a royal commission to recommend the shape of a new second chamber are published.

They will also lose their "club rights" to use the restaurants and bars at the Lords. Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said at the weekend that the Bill would mean for the hereditary peerage an end to "living like a lord at the taxpayers' expense". The royal commission, expected to be chaired by Lord Butler of Brockwell, will be asked to report by the end of the year.

The deal that led to the sacking of Viscount Cranborne as Tory leader in the Lords — allowing 91 hereditary peers to survive in the interim stage — will not be included in the Bill, but added as an amendment as it passes through the Lords.

Lord Cranborne will today speak in the Lords for the first time since he was sacked. He is likely to urge peers to accept the deal he secured for them.

Film about 'selfish' du Pré outrages musicians

By SUSIE STEINER

SIX classical musicians, including the cellist Julian Lloyd Webber and the violinist Lord Menuhin, have written to *The Times* today expressing outrage at a new film about the life of Jacqueline du Pré.

The film *Hilary and Jackie*, which is to have its premiere today, chronicles the life of du Pré and portrays her as selfish, spiteful and manipulative, according to the musicians. "This is not the Jacqueline du Pré that we, as her friends and colleagues, knew," the letter says.

Mr Lloyd Webber and Lord Menuhin are joined in their anger by Itzhak Perl-

man, William Pleeth, Mstislav Rostropovich and Pinchas Zukerman, all of whom worked with du Pré.

Her solo cello performances, particularly of Elgar, in the 1960s made du Pré famous and inspired Mr Lloyd Webber's own career as a cellist; her early death from multiple sclerosis made her turbulent life a focus for scrutiny.

The film, in which du Pré is portrayed by Emily Watson, focuses on the cellist's affair with her sister's husband Kiffer, which was said to be condoned by Hilary to safeguard her sister's fragile emotional state. Watson has been nominated for a Golden-Globe for her part in the film.

which is based on a book by du Pré's sister and her brother Piers, entitled *A Genius in the Family*.

But *Hilary and Jackie* discredits du Pré, according to her supporters. "Jacqueline possessed a wonderful joy in making music and a unique ability to bring that joy to her audience. This is the Jacqueline du Pré that we remember," the letter says.

Lord Menuhin knew du Pré well and his daughters were among her best friends; the violinist Itzhak Perlman also worked closely with her.



du Pré: six defenders

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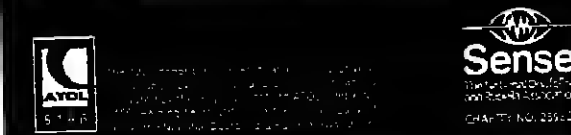
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Thing gives Blair a helping Hand from the back benches

A ficionados of the Addams Family movies will be familiar with a creature called Thing. It is a disembodied hand. It scuttles around the Addamses' creepy mansion doing the family's dirty work. Need a tap fixing, a corpse burying, a mess shovelling under the carpet or a cat throttling in the night? Thing will fix it.

Big-suited Gomez Addams, the head of the household, relies implicitly on the Hand. So does his wife, the palely cadaverous Morticia. How Gomez reminds me of Tony Blair.

At Foreign Office Questions yesterday, a Hand appeared, a man's hand, just before the first question on Europe. This sketchwriter could not say whether the Hand was unattached because, were there a body in tow, its owner had placed himself in the least visible spot in the chamber.

Let me explain. The press sits in a balcony over one end of the chamber, arranged like a shallow dress circle above the Speaker's chair. Only the tops of the heads of MPs at this end are visible. The chair

is crowned with a huge canopy, blocking views of the benches beneath and creating a blind spot on one bench on the government side. Its occupant is invisible to almost all the press: invisible to me.

But I could see a Hand. A right Hand. Visible only from the wrist, like Thing.

The Hand appeared some way into Questions yesterday, and settled, fingers fanned, on the edge of the seat. Horrified, I watched it. It seemed to be intently following ministers' answers: tensing, fidgeting, relax-



ing... depending on what they said. No name, no face, but a weird sense of responsibility, control. We have heard of the Minister Without Portfolio (one such, with his Dome, was famous), but now, freezing here on the green leather, seemed to be a Portfolio Without Minister.

And it was with European

policy that the Hand looked most concerned. It missed the exchanges on St Helena, ignored Kosovo, and arrived just in time to hear Norman Godman (Lab. Greenock & Inverclyde) ask about the enlargement of the European Union.

The Hand looked relaxed about a careful reply from the

minister, Joyce Quinn. But when a leftwinger, Jeremy Corbyn (Lab. Islington N) rose, it scratched angrily at the seat panel. Dennis Skinner (Lab. Bolsover) shouted "When does Albania get in?" The Hand scratched harder.

Andrew Mackinlay (Lab. Thurrock) complained that too few members of the Government were visiting the aspirant members of the EU. Fingers on the Hand quivered. Would it like to visit them, representing the Prime Minister? The Tories' Michael

Howard asked a muscular question about joining the euro. The Hand scabbled impatiently on the bench.

Discussion moved to India and Kashmir. The Hand stretched lazily, fingers outstretched and at rest. When immigration, Iraq and the Middle East were raised, the Hand became bored, drumming fingers. When questions turned to "ethics" in foreign policy, the Hand lost interest and curled up.

I glanced at my order paper. Burma, Basra, Nigeria... no

more questions on Europe seemed likely to be reached. Perhaps the Hand had made a similar calculation. It rose into the air above the bench. Then, hovering left toward the door, moved from my vision, hidden by the canopy over the Speaker's chair.

I leapt up. Dashing to a corner from which the Hand's ed might be visible, I strained to see.

Someone was hurrying out. It was Peter Mandelson, pale and tense. The Hand was with him.

Lords to ask Cook for Pinochet dates

Crown argues that immunity cannot cover all crimes, writes Joanna Bale

THE law lords confirmed yesterday that they are to seek clarification from Robin Cook over the date on which General Pinochet was recognised as a head of state, in what could be a key piece of evidence.

The move comes amid claims by the Crown Prosecution Service on behalf of Spain that the former dictator could not claim state immunity for some of the crimes alleged against him because they were committed before he took on the role.

As the new panel of seven law lords convened for a second day yesterday, its chairman, Lord Browne-Wilkinson, said: "We discussed it overnight and thought it was desirable to have the Foreign Office's view if they are able to give it. It may or may not be vital, but it would be helpful."

Lord Browne-Wilkinson also asked Alun Jones, QC, for the CPS, to prepare overnight a document outlining his "heavily revised case" alleging that General Pinochet, along with other public officials, was involved in a conspiracy to torture others even before he seized power.

Once again accompanied by the Spanish investigating judge Baltasar Garçon, Mr Jones went on to argue that only a limited number of functions of a head of state were regarded as attracting immunity under international law. He said: "Those functions are con-

BRITAIN'S ONLY 'POLITICAL PRISONER'

Baroness Thatcher has described as "excellent" a pamphlet written by her senior aide which claims that General Pinochet has been "kidnapped" by Britain and is being held as a political prisoner. Dr Robin Harris yesterday launched his pamphlet, *A State of Two Chileans: Pinochet and Allende*, at the Howard Hotel in London. Dr Harris evoked the General from all alleged war crimes. Dr Harris was joined by Conservatives including Lord Lamont of Lerwick, Sir Ray Whitney and Nicholas and Ann Winterbottom. The launch was attended by supporters who had flown from Chile for the law lords' hearing. Dr Harris said: "Abuses were committed but under whose authority it is not clear. Pinochet saved his country from a Marxist dictatorship."

fining to state visits, signing treaties, and the sending and receiving of diplomats."

If countries chose to give their head of state more functions, they did not merit immunity. "Individual states may allocate other powers to them, but if a person who is head of state holds other portfolios, they are not recognised in international law as the functions of a head of state, and are not therefore functions in respect of which he enjoys immunity after he has retired," Mr Jones said.

He acknowledged that a head of state was widely regarded as enjoying absolute immunity while in power, but the position changed after he left office.

Mr Jones argued that some acts, such as offences against humanity and war crimes, had been recognised as crimes

under international law long before 1973 and the basis of various international conventions covering human rights and abuses of them was clear.

He said: "It must be that, no matter who you are, whether you are a head of state, a government official, a public official, you have individual, personal responsibility in respect of a category of crimes recognised internationally as particularly odious, such as genocide, torture, and taking hostages. Somewhere a line has to be drawn between actions which are the functions of a head of state, and those which are not."

In a situation in which the United Kingdom was declining to put General Pinochet on trial in this country, it had an obligation to extradite him to Spain under the International Convention against Torture,

and under the European Extradition Act, he added. Chile itself, he pointed out, ratified the torture convention in 1988. Its own 1925 constitution forbade the use of torture.

Professor Christopher Greenwood, dealing with the legal issues raised by the Spanish extradition request, then addressed the question of whether national courts, such as those of Spain, had jurisdiction over internationally recognised crimes. He said that, as yet, there was no international tribunal at which to try people accused of such crimes. But he told the law lords that there was "the very clearest guidance" that, certainly since the Second World War, national courts had increasingly been asserting jurisdiction over crimes such as torture.

Last November, a different panel of law lords ruled that the former dictator was not immune, but that decision was set aside when it was held that the link of one of the judges, Lord Hoffmann, with Amnesty International, should have disqualified him from sitting.

Among those present at the new hearing, which continues today, is Mario Artaza, the Chilean Ambassador. He has been sent back to London to ensure that his Government's case is properly presented. He was recalled to Santiago last month in protest at the Home Secretary's decision to allow extradition proceedings.



William Cuthbert leaving the Commons after appearing before MPs yesterday

Bitter pill for GP as he is 'named and shamed'

BY VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

THE first GP to be "named and shamed" before MPs yesterday admitted that he felt guilty about his treatment of a dying elderly woman who was unable to swallow her pain-killing morphine tablets.

William Cuthbert, who is a family doctor in Wolverhampton, expressed deep remorse as he appeared yesterday before the Commons Public Administration Select Committee. A complaint against him by the daughter of the woman, who died within 24 hours, was upheld by the Health Services Ombudsman in his first case questioning a doctor's clinical judgment.

Dr Cuthbert took a coach from Wolverhampton to attend yesterday's 11am hearing but it arrived late. The hearing was adjourned until 11.30am when the GP arrived red-faced and clearly embarrassed by his delay.

Michael Buckley, the ombudsman, told MPs he believed that the doctor's behaviour "fell well short of the professional service which the patient and her family had a right to expect".

Dr Cuthbert spoke candidly

about his poor relationship with the dying woman's daughter and admitted that this was why he almost treated her call "with a pinch of salt". He said that the experience had made him more vigilant. "I now look out for banana skins."

The episode began on a Saturday morning — June 22, 1997. Dr Cuthbert was stopping when he was contacted by his out-of-hours message service to say that Mrs X, his patient's daughter, said her mother could not swallow her morphine tablets and could they have a syringe-driver, which acts like a drip to deliver drugs.

Mrs X said she also told the message service she had been in contact with the local hospice which was willing to lend her a syringe-driver if the doctor gave it a telephone call authorising the assistance.

Dr Cuthbert said he was never told about the offer from the hospice but admitted that the daughter was "particularly demanding" and often said that her mother was unable to do something or needed a particular piece of appara-

tus, when she did not. "I suppose I did almost take the call with a pinch of salt because she was complaining about a lot of things her mother couldn't do. It's possible that it could have clouded my judgment."

"I feel guilty, I feel I could have done better, but I feel there was a poor lack of communication." He apparently told the telephoneist to tell the family they would have to "manage somehow" through the weekend — a phrase Dr Cuthbert denied using.

Mrs X called the out-of-hours service again that day and the on-call locum visited the house and gave the patient a morphine injection, but she died the next morning.

Ronnie Campbell, Labour MP for Blyth Valley, said: "If you knew the patient was seriously ill and in great pain, when you got that sort of message, don't you think it would have been your duty to go and see the patient straight away?"

Dr Cuthbert said: "With hindsight, yes." He added that he had since apologised to Mrs X several times.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Labour MP leaves wife of 30 years

A Labour MP has left his wife of 30 years for another woman, Denis Murphy, the member for the Northumberland constituency of Wansbeck, admitted yesterday that he had been involved in a relationship with Grace Boyle for "some time". Before being elected in 1997, Mr Murphy, 49, led the controlling Labour group on Wansbeck District Council, where Miss Boyle works in the administration department.

Last October David Cleland, the Labour MP for Tyne Bridge, confirmed that he had left his wife of 33 years, Maureen, after admitting a relationship with his secretary, Brenda Graham.

Millennium call

The millennium celebrations should begin with Midnight Mass at Christmas rather than on December 31, Cardinal Basil Hume, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, said. "The crib will always be more important than the Dome," he told an inter-denominational service.

Law overturned

The European Court has overturned a Greek criminal law, ruling it incompatible with the Treaty of Rome. The judges acknowledged that in principle criminal laws were for nations alone, but Greece could not expect convicted drug users for life as that breached freedom of movement for EU citizens.

Lawrence action

The second-in-command of the Stephen Lawrence murder inquiry will face disciplinary action despite announcing his retirement, the Metropolitan Police said last night. Detective Inspector Ben Bullock, 49, will go before a tribunal on March 22. He has been accused of neglect of duty.

Royal E-mail



The Royal Mail launched its first stamp with a flat rate to send letters across the Continent and beyond. The stamp, above, costs 30p and is valid from Britain to more than 50 countries, including Tajikistan and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The price is replaced by a small E in the bottom left-hand corner.

Inner-city schools criticised by Blair

BY HANNAH BEITS

TONY BLAIR was criticised yesterday for undermining teachers after he said he understood parents who refused to send their children to inner-city schools.

Head teachers accused him of giving parents licence to ignore their local comprehensive schools.

Mr Blair's comments came days after it was announced that the Blair's youngest child, Kathryn, is to follow her two brothers by attending a secondary school several miles from the family home.

Speaking on BBC Radio 4's *Today*, Mr Blair said: "When I look at some of the inner-city schools it is no wonder parents feel they have to move their children out." Mr Blair later reinforced his condemnation of inner-city schools in a debate with teachers on the Government's new £60 million performance-related pay scheme.

The Prime Minister told teachers at Moulsham High School in Chelmsford, Essex: "I know from my own experience that there's not enough understanding in this country of the fundamental importance of getting the system right."

John Dunford, general secretary of the School Heads' Association, said: "This is the sort of self-fulfilling prophecy that makes it difficult for schools to succeed in the inner cities. The Prime Minister should be leading the state education system, not undermining it."

Wales may lose voice in Cabinet

BY VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

WALES could lose its voice at the Cabinet table after the creation of the Welsh assembly. The end of the office of Welsh Secretary was signalled yesterday at a meeting of the Commons Welsh Affairs Select Committee.

Rachel Lomax, Permanent Secretary at the Welsh Office, hesitated when she was asked by Julian Lewis, a Conservative MP, whether she would join him in a bet that there would be a Secretary of State within ten years. "All sorts of things could happen in ten years," she said.

Her reticence was not lost on MPs and Alun Michael, the Welsh Secretary, said: "The really interesting job is that of First Secretary in the assembly. The role of Secretary of State will develop."

Tacit admission that the role of Welsh Secretary was under threat was seized on by Oppo-

sition MPs who believe that Tony Blair's plans for devolution could lead to the break-up of the United Kingdom. Rod Richards, leader of the Welsh Conservative Party, said: "This has let the cat out of the bag. This just shows that the office of Secretary of State is on death row."

Suspensions were heightened by news that only 24 civil servants will work for the Welsh Secretary after devolution, while 1,800 officials will work for the assembly which is to cost £120 million in its first year.

Ms Lomax insisted that after the assembly elections on May 6 the Welsh Secretary would still have to be responsible for any primary legislation at Westminster, would sit in the Cabinet, attend Cabinet committees, and represent Wales in any European negotiations.

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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20 1999

TV chat show guest ends up in the dock

Viewer says man she saw chatting to Richard and Judy is a removal conman. Adam Fresco reports

A WEALTHY businesswoman who turned on her television to watch the Richard and Judy chat show, recognised their guest as a removal man who had driven off with £60,000 worth of her possessions six years earlier, a court was told yesterday.



Parsons denies playing any part in the theft

Pamela McMahon had been moving home with the help of John Parsons in 1992 when he allegedly stole a haul including gold rings, necklaces and other items studded with precious stones valued at £30,000, her prized collection of china and crystal, a new hi-fi system and a number of antique paintings, none of which was insured.

Miss McMahon, an American, first spotted Mr Parsons, who at the time called himself Damien West, a few months later, but was too scared to approach him. Southwark Crown Court was told. She thought that she would never see him again.

But in June last year when Miss McMahon switched on ITV's *This Morning* programme, she saw him happily chatting to Richard Madeley and Judy Finnigan. She contacted ITV and the police, who traced the man to Manchester where he had changed his name.

Mr Parsons, 44, from Manchester, who denies, one

charge of theft between February and March 1992, insisted that he was innocent. He agreed that he had helped her to move home but said that the theft was "absolutely nothing" to do with him.

Miss McMahon said that she met Mr Parsons after arriving in London to manage a Mayfair apartment block. She was staying in one of the luxury flats as she and her brothers made inquiries about buying the development, but the deal fell through so she decided to move to Chelsea.

Chipperfield 'beat chimp till it cried'

By Helen Johnstone

A MEMBER of the Chipperfield circus dynasty was secretly filmed forcing a sick elephant to perform pirouettes and beating other animals, a court was told yesterday.

The offences alleged against Mary Chipperfield, were uncovered when animal welfare activists infiltrated the farm that she and her husband, Roger Cawley, own in Hampshire and secretly filmed there for several months.

Miss Chipperfield, 61, who appeared before Andover Magistrates' Court yesterday under her married name, Mary Cawley, denies 21 charges relating to animal cruelty and neglect of circus animals, between 1997 and January 1998. Mr Cawley, 64, and joint proprietor of Mary Chipperfield Promotions Ltd, denies seven charges.

The case had originally been brought by the Animal Defenders charity in a civil action but the Crown Prosecution Service took it over after the campaigners produced their

evidence. Miss Chipperfield told police that her treatment of the animals was justified to discipline them and she would be the same way again.

There were gasps from the public gallery as the court was shown footage of a trainer employed by Miss Chipperfield striking an elephant 12 times around the legs and back with a metal rod. One clip showed her briefly watching.

Charles Gabb, for the prosecution, said the evidence suggested that, to the couple, "the ends of training the animals justify the means". He said that in 1997, Terry Stocker, a member of Animal Defenders, had taken up work at the farm caring for the animals, which included tigers, lions, elephants, bears and camels. He set up three video cameras and carried a body camera.

Another group member, Rachel White, posed as his girlfriend. Video film that they handed to police showed an incident in which Miss Chipperfield beat an 18-month-old

chimpanzee called Trudi after it refused to get into its cage. Mr Gabb told the court, "She used a riding crop to beat the chimp. She also kicked it. It shows manifest cruelty by this lady to beat it almost mercilessly and when she leaves it to remove its comforter, an orange ball. You can hear the pitiful, pathetic cries of the chimp and Mrs Cawley is heard to say 'You can bloody cry'."

She was alleged to have kicked a camel to get it to stand up, and when that failed, to have beaten it with a stick. She is alleged to have whipped other camels on the back and underbelly with a stick to try to make them walk in a line round the farm's parade ring.

Magistrates heard that Miss Chipperfield made an elephant called Flora perform pirouettes in the ring when it was unwell. Mr Gabb said: "The elephant did not respond to Mrs Cawley's commands. So Mrs Cawley goes up with no reason and whacks it with a very large piece of wood." He said the animals led a miserable existence in which they were shackled for long periods.

Mr Stocker told the court that he had seen Miss Chipperfield hit the chimpanzee 20 times with the crop in a frenzied beating. She kicked it ten times. "It was a severe beating. I went back the next day and saw red marks on Trudi's body, which I photographed."

The independent magistrate, Roger House, was shown footage of Stephen Gills, a trainer employed by the Cawleys, beating elephants with a spade and an iron bar. The court was told that the couple knew that he was violent and cruel to their animals. The trial continues.



Mary Chipperfield and her husband, who deny the charges

Jobcentre bans adverts for Full Monty troupe

By Simon De Bruxelles

A SUCCESSFUL group of Full Monty-style male strippers has been banned from advertising for new recruits in jobcentres.

The dancers, who perform under the name Centaur and were the subject of a BBC documentary last year, need new members for a nationwide tour. No qualification or experience are required, but striking visuals need not apply.

Despite offering the successful candidates between £75 and £100 a day, the adverts for "revue dancers" have fallen foul of a Depart-

ment of Employment ban on jobs in the "sex industry".

In the film *The Full Monty* a group of unemployed men from Sheffield meet at their local job club, decide to take up stripping, and become an overnight sensation. The job club's success is unlikely to be emulated in Centaur's home town, Swansea, where jobcentre managers rigidly abide by the rules.

Centaur's manager, Ritchie Rees, a 34-year-old married father of five, was turned away by both of his local jobcentres, which refused to help find three

more strippers to join the four-man team. Mr Rees, who began stripping for a living six years ago, said: "One of the officials was a woman who recognised me from the shows. I thought they were prudes. People are meant to be a bit more open-minded these days."

A Department of Employment spokesman said yesterday: "We are not taking a moral stand or making a value judgement on these jobs. It is just that we do not want to put our clients in a position where they might feel embarrassed or humiliated."



Pamela McMahon says that she lost jewellery, china and other items worth £60,000

Police worker 'took indecent photographs'

By Russell Jenkins

A PHOTOGRAPHER employed by the police to take pictures of victims of crime took indecent photographs of a woman who alleged that she had been battered, a court was told yesterday.

Peter Sayward, 43, of Lytham, Lancashire, should have seen the 24-year-old woman, who had reported an assault by her boyfriend, at Blackburn police station and confined his attention to bruises on her face, nose and hands.

But he went to her home where he insisted on touching her intimately in order to take photographs of her breasts, and joked about selling the results for a "Page 3" slot.

The woman, who cannot be named for legal reasons, said that Mr Sayward asked to see any other marks on her body but she told him there was none. However, he asked her to lift her pyjama top and her crop top. She told the court: "I just did what he told me to."

As soon as Mr Sayward left the woman complained to a neighbour and then to police. Several further allegations of indecent assault emerged as a result of a subsequent inquiry into his work.

Mr Sayward spent 18 years in the Merseyside force before retiring and joining the Lancashire Constabulary as a civilian scenes-of-crime photographer. He has pleaded not

guilty to three charges of indecent assault.

Chris Knight, for the prosecution, said that Mr Sayward visited the woman in January last year to take straightforward photographs of her injuries. Instead he took "completely unacceptable photographs" of the woman, including a full-frontal view of her exposed breasts.

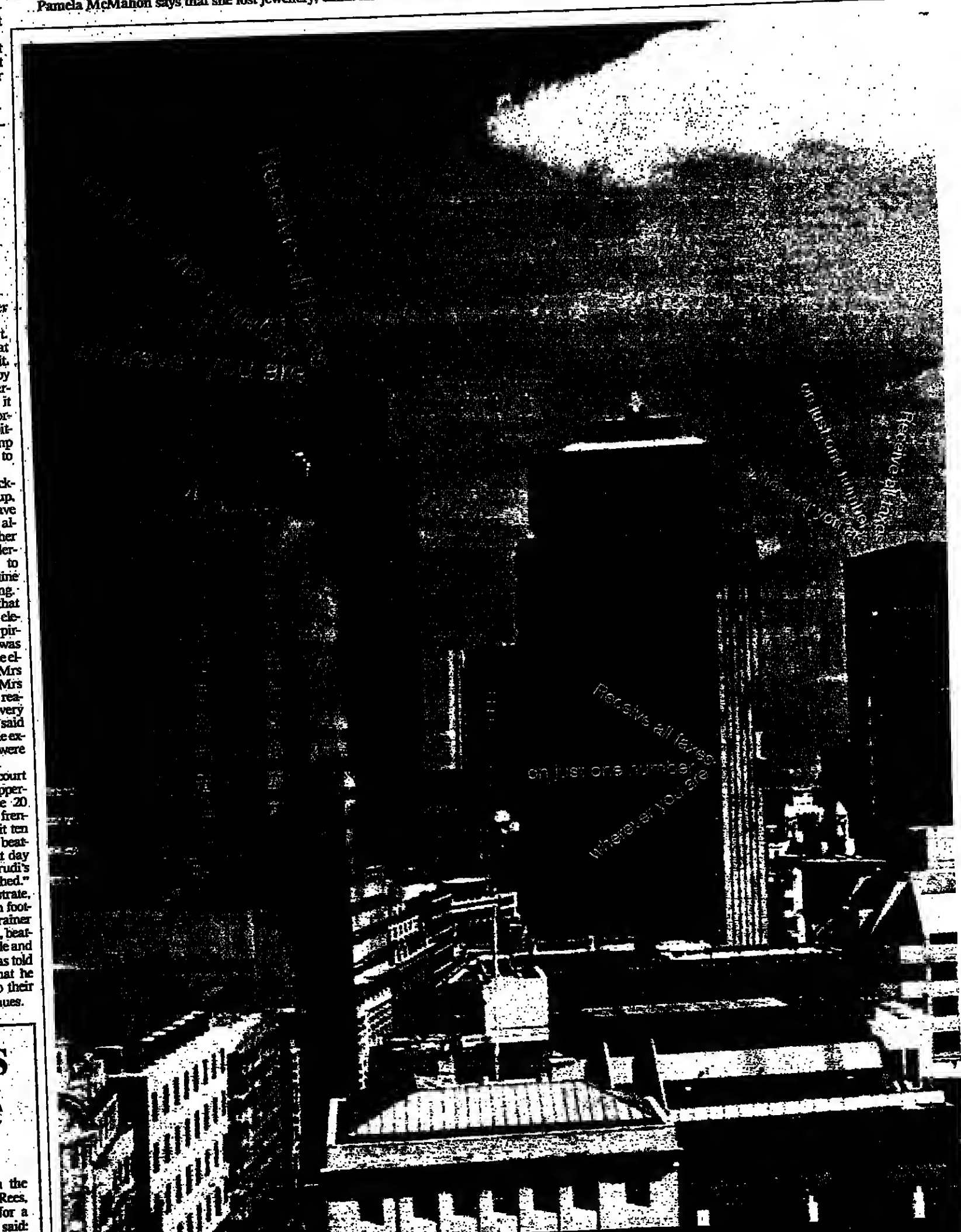
He steered the conversation towards sex and sought to cuddle or embrace her under the guise of trying to placate her, though she showed no signs of distress.

He also got her to change into the pyjamas she was wearing at the time of the attack, then physically examined her.

The court was told how Mr Sayward photographed another woman assault victim in August 1997. The 23-year-old woman had suffered bruising to her thigh and went to a police station for photographs to be taken. Mr Sayward photographed her with her skirt hitched above her underpants and felt the bruising in an indecent manner.

The third incident involved the 23-year-old's mother. During a visit to the victim's house, Mr Sayward gathered coins that had fallen from the mother's blouse pocket and had brushed his hand against her breast while placing them back.

The trial continues.



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THE fall of Jonathan Aitken is an amorality tale. He has been tantalisingly close to the centre of power, serially intimate with a string of beautiful women, but a lifelong stranger to the truth.

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Bristol inquiry 'is not a trial'

Judges free man jailed for 14 years

Corruption charges against Yard detectives lead to appeal ruling, reports Stewart Tandler

A MAN serving 14 years in prison for armed robbery was freed by the Court of Appeal yesterday as a result of criminal charges brought against Scotland Yard detectives.

George Ellis, 37, from East London, had claimed during his trial that a Flying Squad officer had planted false evidence against him.

The court was told that 25 members of the same squad — who cannot be named for legal reasons — could no longer be witnesses in the case because they had either been charged or suspended, or would have been suspended if they had not retired. None of those charged had yet been tried. More members of the unit might be tainted by the allegations and would risk cross-examination if used as witnesses.

Mr Ellis was cleared of taking part in a £37,500 robbery three years ago. One of the 25 police officers charged was a key officer in Mr Ellis's trial.

John Kelsey-Fry, for the Crown, told the court that new evidence had emerged from two former members of the squad who were now helping Scotland Yard's drive against corruption. As a result, the Crown would not fight the appeal. The two informers would



George Ellis with his son George. He said yesterday: "I am devastated by what has happened and I plan to sue"

eventually be witnesses. None of the corruption allegations had been proved but at the moment the Crown could not use the 25 as witnesses of truth. He said the prolonged investigations into the allegations of dishonesty would take time but it would be wrong to delay Mr Ellis's appeal.

The court was told that Mr Ellis, who was cleared of another armed robbery charge by the court eight years ago,

was convicted largely on the evidence that DNA tests showed that a sample of his saliva matched saliva traces on a bandana worn by a robber.

Stephen Kamlish, for Mr Ellis, said at the trial that there were allegations that the saliva had been planted on the bandana. The officer was called from another part of London to collect the saliva. He went on his own to do a routine job normally done by

a non-specialist officer. At the trial he could not explain why he had been called. Mr Kamlish said: "It raises the suspicion he was up to no good."

Quashing Mr Ellis's conviction, Lord Justice Rose, sitting with Mr Justice Maurice Kay and Sir Patrick Russell, said that the Flying Squad officer now charged was "a highly material witness" in the trial. The saliva was found in a bag thrown away by one of the

robbers with £34,000 of the cash. The other £3,500 has never been recovered. Police said one of the robbers escaped with the cash. He was arrested later. The defence claimed the police took the money.

Lord Rose said the officer who collected the saliva had now been charged with dishonesty. Mr Ellis had suggested he had planted the saliva. In the light of subsequent events the conviction could no longer

be upheld. Lord Rose said. There was no suggestion there should be a retrial. The court ordered a retrial for Tony Zamparelli, 34, convicted with Mr Ellis and jailed for 12 years.

Outside court, Mr Ellis called on Scotland Yard to scrap the Flying Squad. He said he had been wrongly convicted twice and sentenced to a total of 27 years in prison. "I am devastated by what has happened and I plan to sue."

Lightning hit twice for 'vendetta victim'

By Stewart Tandler, Crime Correspondent

GEORGE ELLIS might have felt a sense of déjà vu yesterday as he left the Court of Appeal after being freed from his 14-year jail sentence. Eight years ago the court quashed another armed robbery conviction against him also brought by Scotland Yard's Flying Squad.

Mr Ellis, who has been on bail since last autumn, believes that he was the victim of a police vendetta and corruption. He admits that he is no angel: he had started a career of crime by the age of 11. But his only record for armed robbery was 18 years ago and he pleaded guilty.

His present troubles began in 1987 when he was arrested near the scene of an £8,000 bank robbery. His first trial collapsed after the jury was given copies of papers used by his lawyer including his record. The second trial went ahead and he was jailed for seven years before his lawyers were told that an officer's prints had been found on the papers. In 1991 he won an appeal.

"I thought that after that there was no way they would come after me," he said. Then 2½ years ago he was arrested

in Woodford, East London, four miles from the scene of a £37,500 robbery.

The case rested on saliva samples matched to a bandana worn by one of the robbers. He claimed the sample could have been smeared on the bandana.

Once again there was retrial. This time someone had walked past two of the first jury and told them they should acquit. Mr Ellis claims the police wanted to stop the trial because his case was going too well. At a second trial he and two other men were convicted.

Inside prison, Mr Ellis heard of the first arrests by Scotland Yard in its anti-corruption drive and asked his lawyer to check whether any of the officers in his case were involved. Nine months later he was told the Crown Prosecution Service would not fight an appeal. One of the officers faced corruption charges.

Mr Ellis, of Bethnal Green, East London, said: "I am sick. I have served 2½ years for something I have not done. I have no confidence in the corruption drive. Give it a couple of years and they will still be up to the same thing."

Bristol inquiry 'is not a trial'

By Ian Murray, Medical Correspondent

AN INQUIRY into the high death rate among child heart patients at Bristol Royal Infirmary is intended to identify minimum acceptable standards for operations and best practice for carrying them out.

Ian Kennedy, the inquiry chairman, said: "It will not be a trial. We are not seeking to apportion blame. We are aiming to discover what happened in Bristol, why it happened, and seeing if there are lessons to be learned which will benefit the NHS as a whole."

The inquiry was ordered by Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, after a General Medical Council hearing severely criticised two surgeons for continuing to perform complex operations on babies, even though they knew too many of them were dying.

The chief executive of the hospital trust, who was also a doctor, was condemned for failing to use his authority to stop

the operations, although he had been alerted to what was happening.

The GMC hearing was restricted to 59 cases of babies on whom two types of operation were performed between February 1988 and January 1995. The public inquiry is to examine hundreds of operations of different types performed on infants between 1984 and 1995.

The GMC struck off James Wisheart, the senior consultant, and John Roylance, chief executive of the hospital trust, Jahardan Dhasmana, the other consultant surgeon, was barred from operating on children for three years and was later dismissed from his job.

Mr Roylance, the only one of the three to appeal against the GMC decision, yesterday lost an attempt to force the council to hand over a transcript of the private deliberations between members about the case.

Smear test errors 'hit confidence'

By Richard Duce

PUBLIC confidence in cancer screening for women has been dented by blunders at a Kent hospital which falsely gave the all-clear to hundreds of patients, a professor told the High Court yesterday.

Thomas Krausz was called as an expert witness for three women who developed cancer and are now infertile after screenings at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital failed to notice abnormal cells during routine smear tests.

Professor Krausz, an honorary consultant at Hammer-smith Hospital in West London, said that after checking the slides himself he believed that the screeners should have spotted the abnormalities.

Sandra Penney, 36, Helen Palmer, 36, and Lesley Cannon, 39, are seeking to prove that the East Kent Health Authority is liable. The hearing at Canterbury continues today.



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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20 1999

So which three films are simply the best?

BY DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

LORD ATTENBOROUGH is asking everyone in Britain to pick their three favourite films. He named his own yesterday — Charlie Chaplin's *The Gold Rush*, Elia Kazan's *On the Waterfront* and Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* — as he launched Millennium Movies, "the biggest poll" of its kind.

To encourage people to answer the question "Which films touched you most?" there are 25,000 prizes on offer, including a family holiday to Hollywood and five Sony wide-screen televisions.

"I am asking people to really think about films, to think about what they mean to them on a personal level and why," he said. "I also hope the public will become aware of other great movies they may not have seen or possibly even heard of, which will be endorsed by the poll."

Lord Attenborough, 75, whose Oscar-winning films as actor, director and producer — among them *The Great Escape*, *Oh What A Lovely War* and *Gandhi* — are likely to be on many a cinemagoer's list, said that the poll would enhance "the magic of movies".

"This is a tremendous idea, since we are celebrating 100 years of cinema, to celebrate it at the time of the millennium," he said. "We want to poll the whole of the UK. We want votes from the people who really



Attenborough: "Which made you laugh, cry or scream?"

ly matter and who keep movies alive — the audience." There were 150 million admissions to British cinemas last year, said Lord Attenborough, an increase of more than 75 per cent in the past decade. The United Kingdom spent the third highest total on cinema tickets after the United States and Japan.

He suggested that when members of the public nominated films they should choose "not the critically acclaimed but their favourites", those that meant most to them in going to the cinema. "Which made you laugh or cry or even scream? If you start talking about quality, then you're in terrible trouble. It's got to be your favourite movie."

When he first saw *The Gold Rush*, at the London Pavilion in Piccadilly in the early 1930s, it was "a picture that bowled

me over, the first movie I ever saw in a big major cinema". That was his first choice without doubt, he said, but he felt torn in choosing the others.

"How do you leave out Westerns like *Stagecoach*? Or musicals? It is very difficult to refine it down to three." He picked *On the Waterfront* because it was the first time he had seen Marlon Brando — "nothing to do with acting as we knew it".

The initiative is supported by Sky Premier, a channel of BSkyB, in which News International, owner of *The Times*, has a stake. Lord Attenborough, who was created a life peer in 1993 for services to cinema, is the channel's patron.

Barry Norman, the Sky film critic, picked *The Godfather*, *Bringing Up Baby* and *Citizen Kane*, but said that his choices changed from day to day. Although critics nearly always topped their lists with the Orson Welles film, there was a generation of film students who had never heard of it and who "think movies started with *Star Wars*", he said.

In Lord Attenborough's view, that is what the poll is about: bringing films to the attention of people who might not otherwise think of watching them.

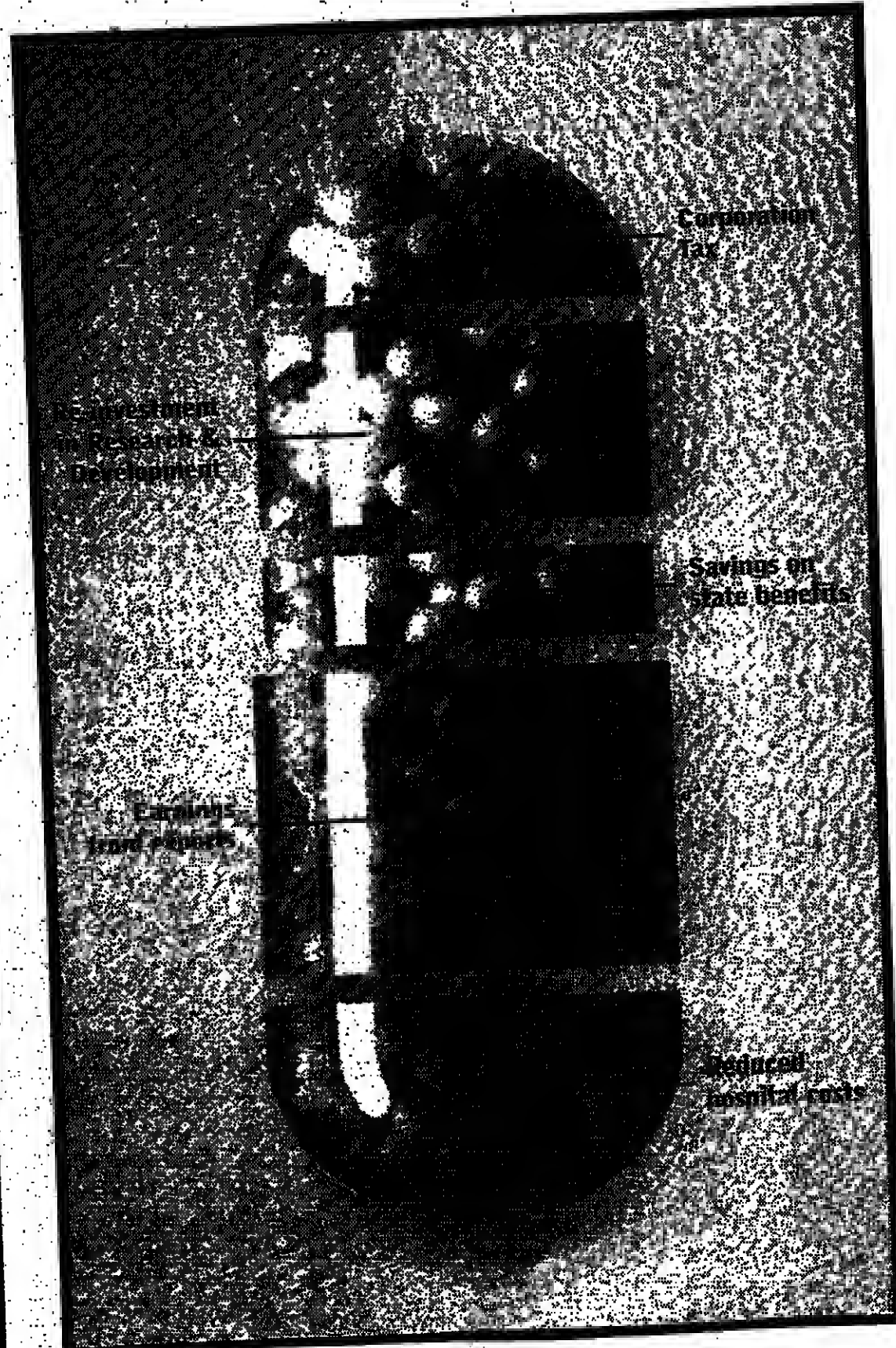
A list of the top 100 will be drawn up and announced in July. The deadline for entries is May 31. They may be sent by post to Millennium Movies Vote, PO Box 1803, London, NW1 8NQ; by phoning 0640 678877; through Woolworth stores; or on the Internet: <http://www.sky.co.uk.vote/>



Director's top three: Chaplin's *Gold Rush*, Brando in *On the Waterfront* and Spielberg's *Schindler's List*



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The value of medicines goes far beyond supporting the NHS. The pharmaceutical industry provides employment for more than 300,000 people and exports over £5 billion of medicines a year, producing one of the country's largest trade surpluses of £2 billion.

Over the past five years pharmaceutical companies have committed over £2 billion in capital investment, and more is planned.

The benefit of the industry is also felt within the Treasury as pharmaceutical companies in Britain pay hundreds of millions of pounds in Corporation Tax each year.

But perhaps the industry is least known for its investment in education, funding half of all post-graduate training for GPs and supporting universities to the tune of £100 million a year.

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CHOSEN BY THE STARS

WOODY ALLEN *Breathless* (1960) — "A beautiful film, a beautiful actor, a beautiful director." *La Grande Illusion*, Renoir (1937) — "A beautiful film, a beautiful actor, a beautiful director." *Pierce Brosnan* *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962) — "A beautiful film, a beautiful actor, a beautiful director." *Michael Caine* *On the Waterfront* (1954) — "A beautiful film, a beautiful actor, a beautiful director." *Frederick Forsyth* *The Great Escape* (1964) — "A beautiful film, a beautiful actor, a beautiful director." *High Noon* (1952) — "A beautiful film, a beautiful actor, a beautiful director." *Who stands alone against the odds* — "A beautiful film, a beautiful actor, a beautiful director." *Lumet* *melodrama in which history* — "A beautiful film, a beautiful actor, a beautiful director." *Terry Jones* *The Great Escape* (1964) — "A beautiful film, a beautiful actor, a beautiful director." *Jonathon* *melodrama in which history* — "A beautiful film, a beautiful actor, a beautiful director." *Space* *melodrama in which history* — "A beautiful film, a beautiful actor, a beautiful director." *1941* (1941) — "A beautiful film, a beautiful actor, a beautiful director." *The Great* (1964) — "A beautiful film, a beautiful actor, a beautiful director."

David Logan, following Tarantino's route to stardom

Scriptwriter pens own success story

BY DALYA ALBERGE

A VIDEO shop assistant who dreamt of working in the film industry while stocking shelves has been signed up by Hollywood as a screenwriter. David Logan, 29, from Brighton, who began writing scripts as a teenager, is working on five scripts for the largest Hollywood studios, including Columbia, TriStar and Warner Brothers.

He was earning little more than £5,000 a year before his big break but now commands six-figure fees. His story is similar to that of Quentin Tarantino, the director of *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*, who also spent years working in a video shop.

His projects include one reflecting the inspiration of David Mamet and Alfred Hitchcock. *Circus* is about a conman who can manipulate anyone: "You never know what's happening until the last scene. It is the ultimate twist movie. I like twists."

The script is to be made into a \$6 million film for Colum-

bia TriStar, directed by Rob Walker and starring John Hannah and Eddie Izzard. He has sold another movie, *Five Killers Killing*, to Sony. Then there is a rewrite of a gangster movie for Samuel L. Jackson for Alliance and an adaptation of Jay Cronley's novel, *An Honest Crook*, for Warner Brothers and Village Roadshow.

During his seven years working for the video shop, Mr Logan would use every spare hour to write and to study scripts and films. Among his customers was John Hay, who directed the comic movie *The Steed*. They used to chat about films and eventually the director agreed to read his script. "Even though it was very raw, it had something very different." They kept in touch with Mr Hay encouraging the young film-maker.

Mr Logan's producer on *Circus*, James Gibb, said: "He's one of the hottest things in Hollywood."

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Punishment gang's brutal 'life sentence'

Martin Fletcher meets a man who paid dearly for giving his friend a lift

ANDREW PEDEN has two stumps where his legs used to be. They were both amputated after he was "kneecapped" last year.

He is still racked by pain. His three young children are deeply traumatised. His friends cannot face him. His wife, Linda, has to carry him up the stairs on her back, lift him onto the toilet or into the bath, and endure his agony each night as he relives the attack in his fitful sleep.

When she goes out she sees the men who committed this evil walking about the streets. "It's wrecked our family," she said. "It's just a living nightmare."

Mr Peden is one of 256 victims of paramilitary beatings or shootings in Northern Ireland over the past 13 months. Andrew Hunter, the Conservative MP for Basingstoke, has said that today in the House of Commons he will perhaps name some of the men responsible.

The aim is to draw attention to these blatant breaches of the Good Friday accord by loyalist and republican paramilitaries whose political representatives sit with impunity in the

Province's new Assembly. Yesterday, Ronnie Flanagan, the RUC chief constable, urged MPs not to identify those allegedly involved in paramilitary attacks as it could prejudice future criminal proceedings.

Andrew Mackay, the shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, said: "These cases prove to me that some of those who signed the accord have not renounced violence. We believe the Government is not ac-

Sinn Féin in the talks to make them work." Mrs Peden said: "They should take someone like Andrew in to tell his story."

Mr Peden's "crime" was to give a friend who was a member of the paramilitary Ulster Defence Association a lift home from a pub one night last May. After he left, the UDA man ordered the beating of an Ulster Volunteer Force member who was having an

tortured him for ten hours and told him to write a last letter to his children.

By 10pm Mr Peden was barely conscious, but he remembers them dragging him onto some open land and telling him to lie down. They then shot him in both legs with a shotgun and left without calling an ambulance. "They meant me to die," he said.

Mrs Peden heard the blasts, but did not make the connection. She received two mysterious telephone calls, and it was past midnight before the police arrived to tell her the news. At the hospital the doctors told her that her husband had little chance of living. The blood poured out as fast as they pumped it into him, and he twice suffered heart failures on the operating table.

They managed to stabilise his condition enough to be able to amputate his left leg one week later. A few weeks later they had to amputate his mangled right leg, and again he nearly died from loss of blood. He was in hospital for seven months and still returns daily. He sees a psychiatrist and psychologists four times a week and a nurse comes daily



Andrew Peden with his 12-year-old son, Drew. Mr Peden's legs were amputated after he was beaten and shot

to change his dressings because his left stump remains "like raw steak".

Mr Peden, who is 35 and worked in an electrical wholesaler, used to take his children out camping, fishing or playing football. Now he sits propped up on the sofa or moves round the house "on my bum" while he awaits artificial limbs.

His 15-year-old son, Gary,

will not talk about the attack and can hardly look at his father. Drew, 12, is consumed by anger and receiving psychiatric help. "He says 'Mummy, a dog wouldn't do that to another dog'," Shaunie, aged five, still believes that her father fell down the stairs and "wishes Santa had left Daddy another pair of legs for Christmas".

The Pedens have received no compensation and have ap-

plied for a new house away from Belfast. Mrs Peden has given up her job to nurse her husband round the clock. "I don't know what it's like having a night's sleep," she said. "He cries out every night for help. He relives it every night. If he gets an hour's sleep that's it. It's wrecked our family."

They see the men who dropped their heads or go to the other side of the "streets," she said. "They are ashamed. They are just evil men. I just hope God repays them."

Mr Peden's body has been broken, but not his will. "I have to come to terms with it. What's keeping me going is Linda and the kids. My goal is to walk down that path with my child. I know I will do it."

Winter blues brighten up

By IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

RELIEF could soon be at hand for sufferers of Seasonal Affective Disorder, the winter condition that induces lethargy, listlessness and depression.

Scientists believe that bright electric lights are the best treatment for the condition, which the Ancient Greeks described.

Chris Thompson, the head of the Mental Health Group at the South Hampshire Hospital, said there was a simple chemical explanation. The pineal gland, in the brain, secretes the hormone melatonin

during the hours of darkness. Melatonin, in excess, has a depressing effect on some people.

Although no more than one person in 20 suffers from Sad symptoms, nine out of ten find that they have minor changes in energy, appetite or weight during the winter months.

Professor Thompson said that trials had shown that Sad responds to treatment with bright artificial light. This tricked the pineal gland into thinking there was enough daylight around to stop pro-

ducing melatonin and no excess built up.

Normal lighting is too dim to make much impact, but new "bright lights" with an output similar to summer daylight can satisfy the pineal gland in an hour or so. However, the lights are not cheap: Philips has just marketed its Original Bright Light for £199. Turn it down and you can use it as an ordinary table light.

For best results the light has to be used early in the day, either at the breakfast table or on the office desk.

New Lad comes up smelling of roses

Mark Henderson reports on how men are being transformed by a cosmetic encounter

BRITISH men have learnt to love the bathroom and are reaching for the moisturiser as never before, the latest comprehensive survey of consumer trends has found. Despite his scruffy, smelly image, it is the lager-swilling, load-of-old-money "New Lad" who is largely responsible for the trend.

The annual *British Lifestyles* report, published today by the market researcher Mintel, confirms that expensive cosmetics and fragrances are no longer a luxury for women alone and identifies older teenagers and twentysomethings as those most likely to "take an interest in their appearance, grooming and health". Sales of male moisturisers and exfoliants, after-shave and shaving products have dou-

bled since 1988 and were last year worth a record £800 million.

The number of male grooming products has mushroomed as cosmetics firms exploit a lucrative new market with advertising campaigns led by glamorous footballers such as David Beckham and Jamie Redknapp.

Paul Rickard, Mintel's head of research, said: "There has clearly been an easing of the reluctance factor which most men have traditionally felt." Mintel predicts that the market will continue to grow, as older men

who are still reluctant to use toiletries are replaced by those who are younger and less inhibited.

Boots said that sales had risen by 10 per cent in the past year, and that men were now likely to buy skincare products and upmarket scents as well as the shaving creams and shower gels that have long been part of the market.

The report also offers further evidence of the power of the "Delia effect" on eating habits. It says that, despite huge increases in sales of ready-made food such as pizza, more people are

taking the trouble to cook a traditional, meat-and-two-veg evening meal.

There are signs, too, of "dumbing down" of Britain's leisure time. While the numbers choosing to visit historic buildings or museums fell by up to 7 per cent and trips to the theatre fell by 21 per cent between 1993 and 1998, there was a boom in the cinema and in the fitness industry.

Consumers' confidence in the economy is fading for the first time in three years, the Mintel report says. There are signs that "saving is replacing spending on luxuries such as holidays and cars, and faith in the housing market is starting to slide, though it is still better than in 1996. Concern is marked among would-be first-time buyers.

The new ford focus

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THE TIMES WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20 1999



The spring look from M&S: from left, cotton-stretch polo neck and trousers with raincoat; wool-stripe jacket and trousers; gypsy top and drawstring trousers; and cotton top with short-sleeve shirt

Double Dutch show in the dark

FROM LISA ARMSTRONG, FASHION EDITOR, IN PARIS

IN A scene could have been straight out of *Prêt-à-Porter*, Robert Altman's celluloid satire, the young Dutch fashion duo Viktor and Rolf presented their couture collection in the dark.

It might seem perverse to show clothes, which live or die by their hand-worked details, by ultraviolet spotlight. The ruse highlighted the line on the audience's attire but left the black entirely obscured. Viktor and Rolf, who came to the catwalks via art school, are self-styled conceptual couturiers. Their last collection, featuring huge neck pillows that made the models look like Quasimodo on a bad-posture day, was entitled *Atomic Chic*.

Concepts are best confined to art galleries and philosophy degrees. However, "The Concept", such as it was (and I think it all boiled down to black and white, paled into insignificance when the models began coming out again, but this time with the lights on. Out they all trotted, the Tuxedo, the Dodge Priest, the Holy Hunter character from *The Piano* and, inevitably, given the ultraviolet, the Skeleton.

Cruel to mock, as Viktor and Rolf can cut an interesting suit, and beneath the concepts there is talent.

Higher marks for some extra sparks

Susie Steiner sees M&S begin its fightback with designs for a brighter spring

CITY analysts were among guests at a fashion show yesterday as Marks & Spencer sought to reverse the downturn in its fortunes with the launch of its new spring and summer collection. The range is titled *Fresh Start*.

The low-key showing took place at the firm's central London headquarters in a brightly-lit, boutique-style room where clothes hung from lonely metal rails while the bar served coffee with not a little portion of humble pie for past mistakes.

"I think our core customer has perceived that we have let her down,"

said Martin Kemp, who took up his role as commercial executive of knitwear and sportswear this week, having been moved from his previous position as head of lingerie — Marks & Spencer's most successful department, which secures 40 per cent of Britain's underwear market.

"I hope what we have done, after much internal reflection, is learnt a lot of lessons and applied them to this spring range," he added. "We are setting out to sell more goods

this spring than last year." Customers may have complained of poor service, badly displayed merchandise, overpricing and a drop in the product quality on which the firm built its name, but Mr Kemp's own view is that the firm's autumn collection failed on colour, with too much grey and black. Its aim this summer is to redress the imbalance.

Yesterday the rails burst with flashes of fuchsia and turquoise in large patterns on retro-style, floaty

resses. The look seemed more Margot in *The Good Life* than Twiggy in *Vogue*, but the question of serving different generations simultaneously is another problem that Mr Kemp aims to tackle.

After two years of rapid growth, resulting in 290 M&S stores nationwide, Marks & Spencer has suffered a pummeling over the past six months. The troubled high street chain suffered critically poor trading over the Christmas period and is-

sued its first profits warning last week. The firm's shares fell to a six-year low as analysts cut their profit forecasts by as much as £200 million.

Marks & Spencer remains dogged by an awkward straddling of the generations, with its middle-aged customers complaining of too much pandering to teenage fashion while the young still steer clear of its mummy image. Attempts at military combat trousers and utility sports-

wear have floundered in a confusion of age and cut which attempts to please all and ends up pleasing nobody.

Mr Kemp said: "We didn't get rid of products for 40 to 50-year-olds, but the problem was they couldn't find them properly because we put the fashion-based, up-to-the-minute products at the front."

Spring and summer will see the Marks & Spencer success stories return — the reliable staples such as T-shirts, pyjamas and underwear in bright whites and pretty blues, which it does so well.



One of Viktor and Rolf's creations shown in Paris



the new ford focus



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French salute a four-legged hero

Ben Macintyre tells how the Nazis executed an army horse that dealt one of their soldiers a mortal blow

A HORSE that was executed by a Nazi firing squad in 1940 after it kicked a German soldier to death has won belated recognition as an equine hero of the Resistance.

The exploits of Iris XVI, a swift and ill-tempered mount that had belonged to General Philippe Leclerc, the liberator of Paris in 1944, are celebrated in the latest issue of *Le Casseur*, journal of the Saint-Cyr military academy, France's equivalent of Sandhurst.

In the years before the war, Iris XVI (a gelding, despite the name) was widely considered the most unruly horse in the army, as well as one of the ugliest, with "a long back, a shambling gait and straggling tail".

"He looked more like a working horse than a cavalry mount," one Saint-Cyrien said.

Despite the animal's appearance and temperament, the chestnut was the favoured mount of Philippe de Hautecloque, a Saint-Cyr instructor who later would use the pseudonym Leclerc to prevent reprisals against his family when he joined General de Gaulle in London to rally the Free French.

Iris XVI gained a reputation as a winner among the military horse-racing fraternity, repeatedly beating more favoured and elegant horses on the track, but it remained remarkably untamed and in

1936 threw the future General Leclerc, breaking his leg in two places and leaving him with a permanent limp.

In 1939, when other horses were mobilised for war, Iris XVI was left behind because it was "considered too precious, or too dangerous". Armand de Vasselot de Régné, a contemporary of General Leclerc at Saint-Cyr, writes.

On June 14, 1940, the Saint-Cyr stables were occupied by a German cavalry unit of the invading Nazi army, whose commander summoned one of the stablehands. "Monsieur, you have in your stables an excellent horse named Iris XVI. This horse beat my horse in a race at the hippodrome. I want to see this horse. Go and fetch it," the German commander ordered.

The stablehand is said to have replied, whether out of fear or calculation: "I know which his box is, why not give me one of your soldiers and he can take him out?"

The luckless German soldier was handed a bridle and shown to Iris XVI's stable, but, as M de Régné records, "when he opened the door, Iris XVI let loose a massive kick and killed him stone dead".

The enraged German officer ordered a swift reprisal. "Put this horse up against a wall. Bring me 12 men. This horse will be shot," he said.



The future General Leclerc riding Iris XVI while still a Saint-Cyr instructor before the war and, right, in Paris after the liberation in 1944



Iris XVI was shot minutes later. The horse has no recorded grave, leaving open the unpleasant possibility that the champion racer and *résistant* may have been eaten.

General Leclerc, leaning on the walking stick that was Iris XVI's legacy to him, entered Paris in triumph alongside de Gaulle four years after the execution of his favourite horse.

The indomitable animal was also remembered fondly by other graduates of Saint-Cyr, including one Captain de La Horie, a renowned horseman and officer in the Second Armoured Division. De la Horie was killed during the attack on Strasbourg in November 1944. The vehicle in which he died had, painted across the top of its windscreen, the

name of another hero who died for France: Iris XVI.

□ Bangkok: France has bestowed the Légion d'honneur, its most prestigious decoration, on a 99-year-old Thai veteran of the First World War, the French Embassy here said yesterday.

Gerard Coste, the French Ambassador to Thailand, pinned the medal on the chest

of Yod Sangrungruang in Phitsanulok, 208 miles north of Bangkok on Monday, the embassy said.

The veteran is the sole surviving member of the 1,284 Thai soldiers who served in the European theatre as part of the Royal Thai Expeditionary Force. He worked as an aircraft mechanic with the French armed forces.

To commemorate the eightieth anniversary of the end of the war, France has been conferring the Légion d'honneur on all surviving Allied veterans as a way of honouring those who fought on its soil to defeat the German Army.

After the war, Yod returned to Thailand, where in due course he became a village headman. (AP)

Chubais libel claim rejected

FROM ANNA BLUNDY IN MOSCOW

ONE of the chief architects of Russia's much-criticised privatisation programme, Anatoli Chubais, who is a member of the right-wing coalition set to oppose the Communists and extreme nationalists in the coming elections, has lost his libel case against Sergei Daryenko, a newspaper and political interviewer.

In his weekly review of the news, Mr Daryenko teased Mr Chubais about the \$90,000 (£35,000) advance he had received from a friend and supposed co-author of a planned book on privatisation. He had television auditions in stitches with his jokes against the unpopular Chubais, who is widely held to be partly responsible for the implementation of the shock of market reform.

Mr Chubais sued for libel, demanding 5 million roubles from OKT, the television company, and 500,000 roubles from Mr Daryenko. The regional court found in favour of Mr Daryenko last October. Mr Chubais appealed to the Moscow City Court, which on Monday upheld the original decision.

Stasi file handover sparks mole-hunt

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

THE "most" comprehensive mole-hunt in the recent history of the German spy service is to begin thanks to an exchange of intelligence between the Central Intelligence Agency and the German authorities.

True, the moles may now be a bit long in the tooth — some of the newly available data relates to Cold War agents from the 1970s — but for the first time spycatchers will be able to lay bare how deeply the East German Stasi penetrated the defences of the West.

Next month Sandy Berger, the National Security Adviser, will hand over to a German emissary a suitcase containing the microfilmed archives of the foreign espionage department (HVA) of the Stasi. The CIA bought the archive in 1989 in an operation codenamed Rosewood soon after the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

The files contain the real names of all the sources and officers who reported to Markus Wolf, the East German spy-master. The Germans have been pressing the Americans

for the information ever since. Only recently did the German spy service (BND) receive a copy of the names of the 1,900 East German agents operating in West Germany. But there is much more to come.

The CIA relented only when two former East German computer technicians cracked the code of four magnetic tapes containing reports from all East German spies abroad between 1969 and 1987. The reports were held by the Gauck Agency, which is in charge of secret police archives.

Now a trade has been arranged, there should be some clarity about the killing last year of the commander of the Swiss Guard — there was speculation that it was linked to East German infiltration at the Vatican. Persistent rumours about Stasi contacts with the Labour Party in the early 1980s and Social Democratic parties throughout Europe will be tested also.

Not a good time, in short, for agents enjoying their retirement on the golf course.

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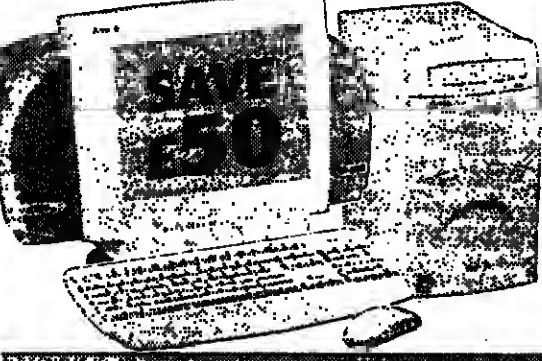
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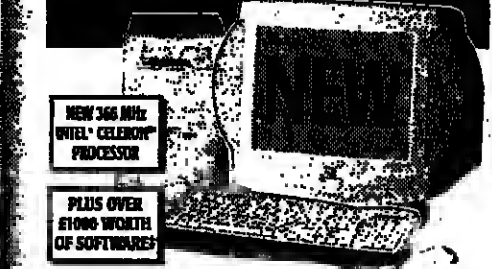
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Freetown ruins left to looters

As Ecomog forces retake the streets, Sam Kiley visits a suburb with no trace of women and children

SAVED from two weeks of bombardment and rebel atrocities, their homes burnt to the ground, their women abducted as sex slaves and their lives shattered, starving residents of Freetown's Kissy suburb emerged from hiding yesterday to scavenge for food.

Young men, some of them probably rebels themselves, risked summary execution by Nigerian soldiers to squeeze through holes in the walls of the only warehouse still standing at Queen Elizabeth II docks, retaken by Nigerian forces yesterday morning, to steal bags of rice, cartons of cigarettes and a few crates of whisky.

From these few looted goods, they hope to rebuild their lives in a city where food supplies, most of them stored in Kissy, have been stolen by retreating rebels who burned down every building in the suburb.

Melted glass hung from charred window frames of burnt-out homes. Outside many of their owners lay dead in the street, killed by shelling or murdered by the rebels. Acrid black smoke choked Nigerian soldiers patrolling along Blackwall Street as they ducked behind buildings to avoid sniper fire from the surrounding hills.

Some of the survivors from the fighting in the east of Freetown and elsewhere are being sheltered in the city's stadium. But the 35,000 near-starving survivors cannot account for the whereabouts of the thousands who have disappeared.

The bodies of some, and dead rebels from the fighting, floated near the docks. Vultures revealed the presence of others torched along with their homes. But in the frightening silence of Kissy, broken only by the rattle of sporadic rifle fire, most people seemed to have simply vanished.

Small groups of young men stood on street corners and raised their hands to wave at passing Nigerian soldiers. But after thousands of rebels infiltrated the city posing as civilians two weeks ago, and then used local residents as human shields to overrun Nigerian de-



Local residents warily take to the smouldering streets of eastern Freetown yesterday after the area was recaptured by Ecomog troops

fences, every man in Freetown, and most women, are considered suspect by the Ecomog soldiers.

"Look at him, look at him waving. Where are all the women? These are all rebels, all thieves and bandits," muttered an Ecomog soldier as he levelled his weapon at a group of teenagers loitering near burning buildings and a pile of rotting corpses.

A Lebanese businessman told of how he had been beaten and his 22-year-old daughter, a well known local beauty, had been abducted.

Since today Sankofa formed his Revolutionary United Front in 1991, his men and their allies have abducted hundreds of young women to use as sex slaves. Those who have managed to escape, all of them HIV positive, have given descriptions of depraved assault.

The extent of these atrocities, and a widespread contempt for the disloyalty of most Sierra Leonean soldiers,

has prompted battle-weary Nigerians to take the law into their own hands.

"We let these people wander around the town, we fight for their country, and then they will turn around and stab us in the back. When we catch one we go fire him [we shoot him]," said a young Nigerian soldier. As he spoke four cap-

the Red Cross had been caught monitoring Nigerian radio traffic and sending it to the rebels.

"We have arrested six of them but they are continuing to use the ICRC net to spy on us. There are others we are looking for and that is why we have taken away all aid agency radios," he said. Last week

a Nigerian appeal for help from the West, in particular for helicopter support.

"Until now, we have been living on pledges. Some of them have been redeemed by the British Government who sent us vehicles. We have appealed to the whole international community to help us out. We have to put an end to these rebels," he said.

Britain yesterday announced that further £1 million would be provided for humanitarian aid and to bolster the Ecomog forces in Sierra Leone.

Announcing this in the Commons, Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, said that the money would be immediately available to alleviate suffering in the country.

The sum is being shared equally by the Foreign Office, the Department for International Development and the Ministry of Defence, which will defray some of the costs of HMS Norfolk, the frigate cur-

rently offering medical and logistical help off the Sierra Leone coast.

Britain has already given £3 million in direct and multilateral military aid to Ecomog and has spent a further £30 million in emergency humanitarian and reconstruction assistance.

Meremaries held: Despite the unilateral ceasefire, fighting continued in the west of Freetown where two Italian mercenaries, a man and a woman, were taken prisoner, according to a French pilot working under contract to Ecomog.

Ecomog forces carried out air operations until nightfall against rebel positions in the hills south of Aberdeen, west of Freetown where the tourist hotels are situated.

The French pilot, Jean-Jacques Fuentes, said the two Italian mercenaries fighting for the rebels had been caught "red-handed, as they torched houses and fired guns". (AFP)

"In the frightening silence most people seemed to have vanished"

tured rebels were driven past in a blue pick-up truck. Soon after, out of sight, another soldier fired several short bursts from his automatic weapon. The young Nigerian smiled and shrugged.

Yesterday Major-General Abu Ahmadu, the Ecomog Task Force Commander, said that local staff members of the International Committee of

the ICRC was expelled from Freetown by Sierra Leone's Government in spite of protests from Geneva.

Having taken the military initiative away from the rebels, who came within a whisker of taking over the city at the beginning of the year, General Ahmadu said that he hoped to "trap them and smash them". But he renewed

Zimbabwe police grant lawyers access to editor

FROM JAN RAATH IN HARARE

LAWYERS and members of the family of Mark Chavunduka, editor of *The Standard*, were allowed to see him yesterday for the first time since he was detained by Zimbabwe military police eight days ago over a report in his newspaper of an attempted coup to overthrow President Mugabe.

"He looks okay," said Clive Wilson, proprietor of *The Standard*, who was also allowed to see Mr Chavunduka briefly at Harare central police station. Military authorities handed him over to civilian police on Monday night.

Mr Chavunduka, 34, and Ray Choto, a reporter who presented himself to police yesterday after a week in hiding, are to be charged with "causing alarm and despondency" under legislation introduced in 1960 by the Rhodesian authorities to proscribe black nationalists who were campaigning against white rule.

The police had asked Mr Choto to come in for questioning, indicating that he and Mr

Chavunduka were to be charged. The editor was detained after *The Standard* published a report on January 10 that 23 soldiers, including seven officers, had been arrested for an alleged coup attempt in December.

"We hope he and Ray will both be charged tomorrow and released pending trial," Mr Wilson said last night.

Mr Chavunduka's lawyers and family were allowed access to him shortly after the Zimbabwe High Court issued a third order on Mwenemahachi, the Defence Minister, to bring the editor to court today and to explain his continued detention. Court officials had failed to serve two of the orders on the minister in person after his officials and family said he was away.

Mr Chavunduka's detention has been condemned by unions, churches, academics and by local and international human rights groups who say it violates press freedom and the rule of law.



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FROM TOM WALKER IN RACAK

ABOVE the Orthodox Church on the Kastanje hill overlooking Stenje and Racak, monitors were staging their usual vigil through binoculars, documenting minute by minute the village's fate in the mist below. After a particularly heavy bout of gunfire, a convoy of 20 police vehicles descended from the hill opposite. Shortly afterwards a helicopter went in to remove the police casualties. Later, a release from the Pristina media centre said that a police deputy chief, Miro Medić, had been killed and two of his colleagues seriously wounded as they "guarded the investigation authorities". The regional prosecuting magistrate, Danica Marinković, was said to have again entered the village, although she refused to talk to journalists afterwards. Late on Monday she was reported to have had the back windows of her Lada Niva shot out by a Kosovo Liberation Army sniper as the police removed the Albanian bodies from Racak mosque.

KOSOVO MISSION

ture of the Kosovo mission, should its ambassador, William Walker, be forced to leave. Serb sources confirmed that the return of Mr Walker's possible expulsion would be its harm to Ms Marinković's income she and her husband own the apartment block where Mr Walker, now dubbed the "ambassador of lies" by the Serb press, rents a flat at considerable cost. The media centre said it was



Walker may be forced to leave by Serbs

on the point of organising a police press conference to give the official Serb version of events at Racak. The local authorities and Belgrade have been given heart by reports of what French newspapers are said to be planning to publish today. These reports would throw considerable doubt on the Albanian accounts of what happened at Racak. Several French journalists have studied video footage of the police attack on the village on Friday, and they have concluded that women and children were not separated from their menfolk, as has been widely reported. The video footage also shows the police to have been without the masks reported by the Albanians, and the French journalists also postulate that the Albanians both shifted many of the bodies of the massacre victims and mutilated them. "The best proof will come from the autopsies," said a Serb official in Pristina. "Unfortunately, the Finnish pathologists cannot join us until Thursday," the official added. "But thankfully we have experts from Belarus observing the investigations. I hope the truth will come out before the Nato bombing starts."

Belgrade warned of raids 'in days'

BY MICHAEL EVANS AND MICHAEL BINYON

TWO Nato generals gave President Milosevic a warning yesterday to pull back his troops from Kosovo, as the US Ambassador to the alliance predicted that airstrikes could be launched within days if the Yugoslav leader remained defiant.

At a lunchtime meeting with Mr Milosevic in Belgrade, General Wesley Clark, Nato's supreme allied commander Europe, and General Klaus Naumann, chairman of the military committee at alliance headquarters, spelled out the consequences if Serb forces continued to mount attacks in Kosovo.

Alexander "Sandy" Vershbow, the US Ambassador to Nato, made it clear in public

MILITARY OPTIONS

that this could mean imminent airstrikes. Speaking on the BBC's Today programme, he said that if Mr Milosevic adopted a totally defiant posture with the two generals, alliance governments would be forced to make a decision on action within a matter of days. "The situation is very urgent," he said. "Time is running out for Milosevic. He doesn't seem to understand how serious the situation is. I don't think our patience will extend for very long." Sandy Berger, the US National Security Adviser, said in Washington that the threat of force was still "very much an option". Before meeting Mr Milosevic, General Clark said that the military plans drawn up



last October for extensive airstrikes were still "very much alive". He told the BBC: "Most of the forces are poised and ready should they be called on today." Thirteen Nato countries have combat aircraft deployed in Italy for possible airstrikes and remain on a high operational status. The RAF has four Harrier GR7 ground attack aircraft at Gioia del Colle, one TriStar airborne refuelling tanker at Ancona and two Sentry early warning radar systems at Aviano. For the planned airstrikes

campaign against Yugoslavia in October — averted at the last moment — a total of 500 aircraft were assigned for the raids, including six US B52s, sent to RAF Fairford in Gloucestershire. At the Belgrade meeting, the two Nato generals demanded that Mr Milosevic bring to justice those responsible for the massacre of 45 Albanians in the village of Racak in Kosovo, the incident which provoked the latest confrontation. Generals Clark and Naumann also tried to persuade

Mr Milosevic to reverse his decision to expel William Walker, the American head of mission in Kosovo of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. The Yugoslav Government later announced that it had delayed the 48-hour expulsion order by a further 24 hours, after a special request from Knut Vollebæk, chairman of the OSCE. The two generals will be reporting back to Nato's North Atlantic Council in Brussels later today. Also today, Britain will chair a meeting of the

six-nation Contact Group in Brussels, at which political directors from Russia, America and four European Nato allies will examine the bleak options facing those attempting to promote peace negotiations in Kosovo.

Moscow remains staunchly opposed to the use of force, and is expected to take as strong a line against Nato airstrikes as it did against the British and American attacks on Baghdad. Western diplomats were encouraged by Russia's recent condemnation of violence in Kosovo, but were pessimistic that this could be translated into gaining greater leverage over Belgrade.

Instead, today's meeting will focus on ways of breaking the diplomatic deadlock by intensifying the pressure on Belgrade in the United Nations, raising shuttle diplomacy to a higher level and proposing a Dayton-style conference of all the parties in a third country.

Diplomats admitted yesterday that there was little incentive for either Mr Milosevic or the Kosovo Liberation Army to begin meaningful talks. They hoped that the KLA could be persuaded to join negotiations, either by squeezing its supply of weapons from Albania or by speeding up elections in Kosovo for Albanian political representatives who could claim a mandate for talks. But the KLA is likely to deal harshly with any rival Albanian factions.

The brain-storming session of the Contact Group in Brussels will be followed by the two generals' reports. The Contact Group is still searching for a way to co-ordinate the various initiatives by Nato, political directors and the OSCE.

Macedonia force on alert as evacuation fears grow

FROM JAMES PETTIFER IN SKOPJE

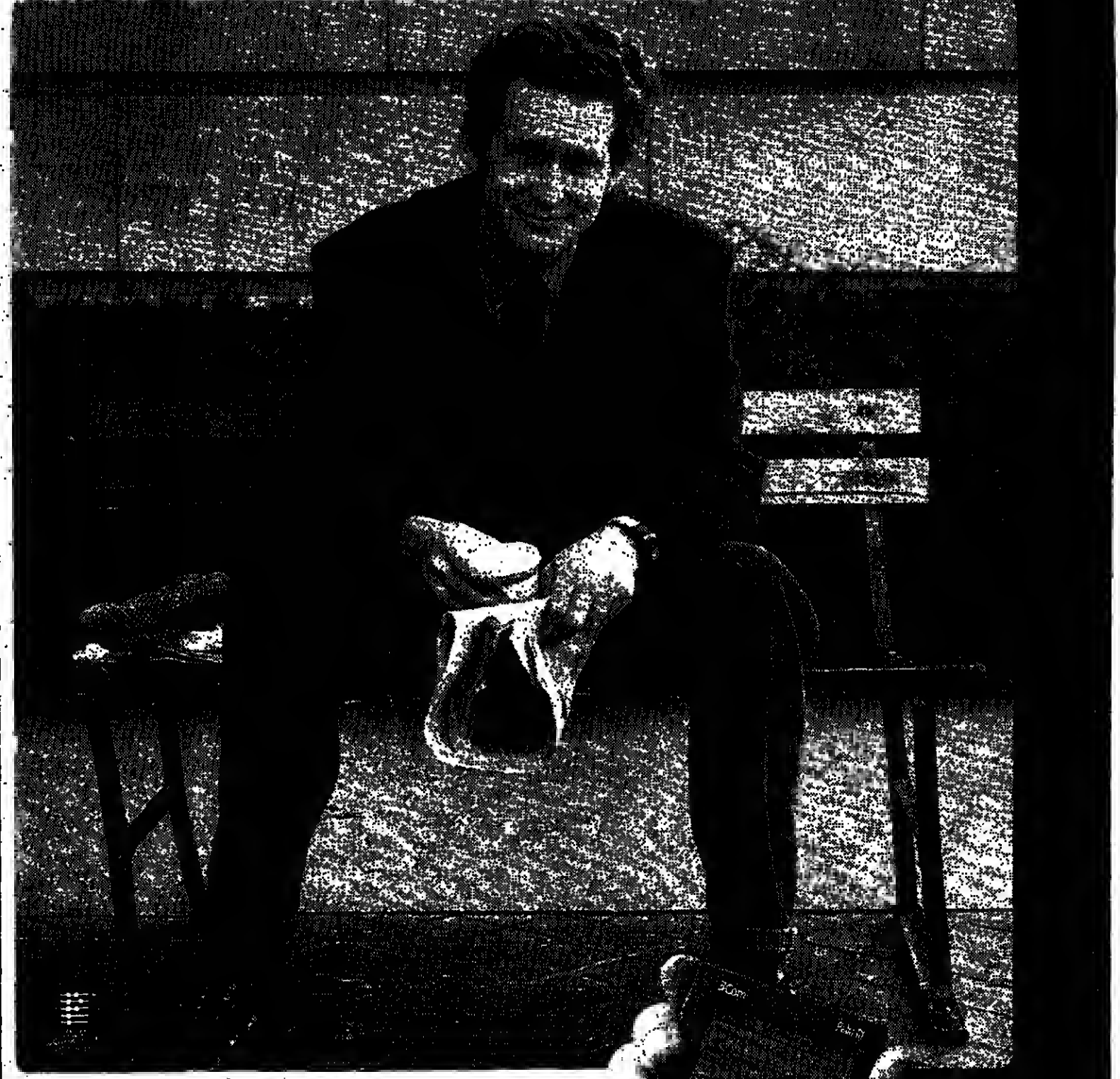
NATO WATCH

THE 2,300 members of the Nato Evacuation Force in Skopje remained on full alert yesterday as the possibility grew of a direct intervention to remove international monitors from Kosovo. Nato has considerable military resources here but, as always in the Balkans, things on the ground can look very different from the way they seem in the military planners' offices in New York or Brussels. It is not clear what the nature of the United Nations preventative peacekeeping force will be if the Nato force gets involved in Kosovo. The blue-helmeted troops have been patrolling the borders of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia since 1993. The Nato operation is French-led and few of the French officers here expect direct involvement. "We are fighters, yes, but only for a big fire," one said. But

many believe that they will be used if the Serbs take hostages from the monitoring force. Most of the Italian soldiers, billeted in the Hotel Tourist in Marshal Tito Street agree. "We would be invading Yugoslavia," one said. Nato plans, as always, are prey to the traditional Balkan loyalties of the big powers. The French officers are strongly pro-Serb: "It is the Muslim problem. We have it in France," one British said. Some feel that the Nato helicopters would be vulnerable to Serb anti-aircraft fire and it would require a major assault to bring off a successful hostage rescue. El Helsinki: The behaviour of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) makes it harder for the West to intervene militarily on its behalf in the Serbian province, a senior American diplomat said yesterday. Robert Gelbard, President

Clinton's special envoy to the Balkans, said that the KLA bore part of the blame for the tension in Kosovo, even though President Milosevic of Yugoslavia was the main culprit. "We do not want to be the Kosovo Liberation Army's air force," Mr Gelbard told a news conference. "They have to learn to obey the rules, too." Mr Gelbard said that Yugoslav forces were not alone in committing violence in Kosovo and that the KLA, which is fighting for independence for the mainly ethnic Albanian province, had engaged in murder and kidnapping. However, he described as criminal President Milosevic's refusal on Monday to allow Louise Arbour, the UN war crimes prosecutor, to enter Kosovo. "The expulsion of Louise Arbour has been yet another demonstration that Slobodan Milosevic is an international outlaw," Mr Gelbard said. He declined to comment on the likelihood of airstrikes threatened by Nato. (Reuters)

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WORLD SUMMARY

70 miles of cones settle border row

Lagartococha, Peru: President Fujimori of Peru and President Mahuad of Ecuador unveiled a line of concrete cones demarcating a 70-mile stretch of the border between the countries in a remote rainforest region. The meeting marked the end of a dispute that has led to three wars in 100 years.

Rapist to die

Manila: A man who raped his stepdaughter, aged 11, should be put to death by lethal injection "without delay" the Supreme Court ruled, clearing the way for the first execution in 23 years.

'Witch' girl killed

Lausanne: A girl of 11 was beaten to death in front of her two sisters aged five and nine because her mother and aunt believed she was bewitched. Swiss police said. Both adults have been arrested. (AP)

Plea for food aid

Seoul: Famine-hit North Korea has demanded a million tonnes of US food aid in return for allowing an inspection of an underground site suspected of being for "nuclear purposes." (AFP)

Panda attack

Beijing: A peasant in Sichuan province has been mauled by a giant panda after falling into its shed at a breeding centre. The woman was seriously injured in the attack and underwent an operation. (AFP)

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3Com More connected

Joy in the rain as Hussein returns home

By CHRISTOPHER WALKER
IN AMMAN

JORDAN gave way to euphoria yesterday as King Hussein returned home from a six-month cancer cure to resume control of the desert kingdom he has ruled for 47 years.

Up to a million Jordanians lined the streets of the rain-soaked capital to greet the man known by diplomats as PLK (Plucky Little King) as he braved wintry weather to wave from the open top of a white Mercedes.

Some Jordanians, maintaining Beduin custom, slaughtered sheep and camels in the King's honour. Others sat in tents heated by smoky wood-burners and filled with patriotic bagpipe music. Loudspeakers lined a route lit with fairy-lights and festooned with giant portraits of the 63-year-old

monarch and his wife, Queen Noor. Shopkeepers offered trays of sweetmeats and cardamom-laced coffee to passers-by.

Munir Abdul Samad, 42, an English teacher, pointed to a camel squatting on the back of a white pickup truck. "We have brought the animal 150 miles to kill it here to show His Majesty how much we love him and how we have missed him like a father," he said.

The teacher, his head swathed in a red and white keffiyeh, added: "It is truly miraculous. For nearly a year, we had no rain. Now, within hours of the King addressing us on Saturday night, it has rained almost non-stop. It shows even the heavens are determined to welcome him."

From the atmosphere along the 15-mile route of the royal motorcade, the country might

just have won the World Cup, or even a war. "I can tell you what you see is genuine, heart-felt feeling," Mr Samad said. "Without the King we were all frightened what might happen to our country."

Many were anxious to see how the King looked after six months of chemotherapy in the US for non-Hodgkins lymphoma. Doctors have announced him cured after treatment which also included a transplant of his own bone marrow and blood transfusions from close relatives.

The King—the world's longest-serving executive ruler—piloted his own jet home.

Somehow he appeared to have gained strength since being helped towards the plane in London by his American-born wife only hours earlier.

In a symbolic gesture that will have appealed even to his

Islamic fundamentalist enemies, the King's first act was to kneel and pray towards Mecca on a red and black mat laid out on the sodden runway. Then he met Arab notables, including the President of Yem-

en, the Emir of Qatar, the Crown Prince of Morocco and Bahrain, and Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader.

Throughout the day, Jordan Television relayed film of the King's reign, which began

when he was 17, not long after his grandfather, King Abdullah was assassinated in front of him in Jerusalem.

Business stretched in a forest across the wide boulevards of Amman proclaimed: "You re-

turn like the soul to the body."

The excitement was reinforced by the fact that 80 per cent of Jordanians have never known another ruler and have a rapport with the King.

"The simple fact is that we love the man and we admire him," said Naim Muleek, a Jordanian Christian of Palestinian origin. "We want to show you how happy we are, he is well."

The King said yesterday that there was "much to be done". He has promised to introduce a series of reforms before he returns in two months to the Mayo clinic in Minnesota for what is described as a routine check-up. The planned reforms include a rooting out of corruption.

He has also told close aides that he plans to convene a family council to deal with the future of the Hashemite dynas-

ty. There is speculation that he wants Prince Hamzah, his 18-year-old son by Queen Noor, to succeed him, rather than his brother, Crown Prince Hassan bin Talal, 51, his designated successor.

A palace official said: "His Majesty, a strong believer with a deep sense of faith in God's will, has confronted life and death, during those difficult days [of his cure]. It naturally rekindled a wish to seek posterity through passing the succession to one of his sons."

Two Israeli air force F16 fighters provided an honorary escort for King Hussein as he piloted himself over Israeli air space. Israel's Defence Ministry said the planes met the King's plane 50 miles outside Israel's waters above the Mediterranean Sea. (AP)

Leading article, page 15



King Hussein, watched by Queen Noor, is embraced by his brother, Crown Prince Hassan, after arriving home in Amman yesterday

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Travel agent denies Miss World rape

Ramleh: An Israeli travel agent has denied raping Linor Abargil, the 19-year-old Israeli model who is Miss World, saying: "I didn't do this dirty thing."

A court here yesterday ordered that Shlomo Nour, 43, be held until January 31 pending an Israeli police inquiry into the alleged rape outside Milan on October 6.

Mr Nour, who was arrested at Tel Aviv airport on his return home this month, said: "I came to Israel on my own initiative. I didn't do this dirty thing. I didn't do this disgusting thing, and I am an innocent man."

Ms Abargil, who won the Miss World crown in November, alleges that the Egyptian-born Israeli, who ran a travel agency in Milan, raped her at

knife-point in his car after offering to drive her to Rome for a flight home.

Mr Nour claims that they had consensual sex in his Milan apartment. (Reuters)

Nour claims Abargil consented to sex

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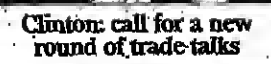
**BY DAMIAN WHITWORTH
IN WASHINGTON**

He also attacked the prosecution's insistence that witnesses, including Ms Lewinsky, must be called. He wondered how then they could be so certain of the strength of their case when "Kenneth Starr" admitted he hadn't met any of the witnesses who went before his grand jury.

The initiatives will be aimed at thwarting hackers armed with destructive computer

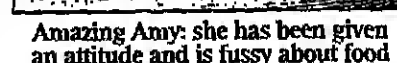
He proposed more funds to support 8,000 Russian scientists to work on civilian research and for the dismantling and storage of warheads and the disposal of 50 tons of plutonium. The programme would help to tighten export controls, and especially to prevent Iran from obtaining technologies from Russia by underhand means, Mr Clifton said. It would also

More contentious were the President's plans for keeping social security solvent beyond 2032 when, on present showing, it will be unable to pay full benefits to all the "baby-boomers" in retirement. He suggested using 62 per cent of the long-term projected budget surplus, about \$2,800 billion, to increase the social security reserves. Another \$500 billion would go into new government-subsidised retirement savings accounts.



military test site known as Area 51. He had hoped to locate an inscribed rock said to have been left there by the lost 49ers, a doomed wagon train of gold-seekers. The cave with the chest was several days' walk west of Area 51, he said.

Amazing Amy, a plastic infant with a microprocessor for her heart and soul, has electronic sensors on her skin and tongue and a 10,000-strong digital phrasebook including such alarm calls as "I need medicine!" and "Whoa! My nose says it's time to change my diaper." Amy was the sixth most popular electronic toy this Christmas. She was beaten by the "bounce-around Tiger" and four ver-



"Our mission was to make Amy as real as can be," a spokeswoman for her manufacturer told *The Washington Post*. She

Nowadays "kids expect their toys to beep and talk back to them and have a 'attitude'," one industry analyst said. Parents are not so sure. One complained that Amy was teaching his daughter that children can expect to run the house. Others told of exhausted ten-year-olds looking for "medicine" and "milk". Still others have returned the dolls to the shop. But there is an easier option. Amazing Amy has an on/off switch in the small of her back.

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Seeking clues to natural cures

Mexico's flora could be nature's storehouse for remedies to many diseases. Anjana Ahuja reports

With its thick jungle and magnificent mountains, southern Mexico is one of nature's richest botanical gardens. The thousands of plants that flourish there — some grow nowhere else — have provided medicinal remedies for many centuries to the isolated Mayan people.

Now the Mayas are to let the world in on their secrets. Xenova, a British pharmaceutical company, together with scientists at the University of Georgia, are embarking on a project to document the flora in the politically troubled Mexican state of Chiapas.

Mayan doctors and healers will be interviewed to find out which plants they use to treat common ailments, such as tropical diseases.

The groundwork for the project has been laid over the past decade by a husband and wife team of anthropologists, Professor Brent Berlin and Dr Elio Ann Berlin, based at the University of Georgia. They have collected specimens of about 1,600 plants and recorded the ailments they supposedly cure. They also carried out health surveys on thousands of residents, as well as interviewing experts. The medical practices of the Mayas are so complex that the couple's findings about just one class of illness — gastrointestinal diseases — filled a 500-page book.

In 1997, realising the enormity of cataloguing other herbal remedies, Professor Berlin contacted Xenova, which is based in Slough, Berkshire. "It fitted in perfectly with what we do at Xenova Discovery," says Dr Neil Robinson, head of analytical chemistry at the research arm of the company.

"We are interested in developing drugs from natural products, especially micro-organisms in plants, and we have collected samples from all over the world. One of the most familiar drugs, aspirin, was originally derived from willow bark, so there is a long tradition of treatments coming from natural sources."

"We were particularly interested because Chiapas is a mecca of biodiversity — it has thousands of plant species that are rare and perhaps don't grow anywhere else, and harbour organisms not found anywhere else."

Last month the Xenova was awarded a grant of £300,000 a year for five years by a consortium of organisations, including the National Institutes of Health in Washington, to pursue the scheme.

The two collaborators are approaching the project from slightly different angles. Both hope that Western medicine can benefit from Mayan medicinal expertise honed over centuries. The Mayas have potions for such diverse conditions as



Passing on a natural asset: women in the State of Chiapas in Mexico gather to practise their traditional medicine

diarrhoea, fractures, burns and mental disorders. One plant is even used as a means of birth control. Fungi are also popular. Pharmacological studies have shown at least some of these treatments to be effective — coyote hush leaves, undocumented in modern medical literature, work wonders for diarrhoea, while a cactus balm can soothe burns.

Xenova is hoping to uncover plants that can treat more serious illnesses, such as cancer. The company has gambled successfully before: a compound found in exotic soils, known only as XR9576, may have potential as an anti-cancer agent. For Professor Berlin, the project represents the chance to document traditions and practices that are in danger of disappearing, either be-

cause of the vanishing rainforest or because modern generations are turning to more orthodox medicine. "We want to convince the younger Mayas that it makes more sense to use the natural pharmacy in their backyard than spending good money on conventional medicine that does the same thing," Professor Berlin says.

There are estimated to be 9,000 plants of interest, each playing host to several micro-organisms. The most laborious and time-consuming aspect of the project will be the collection and identification of species: specially trained botanists from the area will add the effort greatly.

Back in the laboratory, thousands of specimens can be scrutinised in a day. Cells are brought into contact with

plant extracts to see if the concentrate has any effect. "If you get an effect, you have to find out what in the extract is causing it," Dr Robinson explains. "That means separating and purifying each compound in the extract."

The next step is to find out which bit of the cell is targeted by the compound. At this stage, chemists will create hundreds of analogues — substances with very similar molecular structures — and then test them. This helps to home in on the chunk of the molecule responsible for the effect.

Dr Robinson adds: "This tweaking might also help to produce a compound that has the same biological action but fewer side-effects, or might make the substance easier to formulate into a drug. For

example, if a compound can be tweaked so it will dissolve in water, one can administer it as a tablet rather than as an injection, which is easier."

Conscious of accusations of bioprospecting — exploiting the biological treasures of another country for profit — Xenova and Professor Berlin plan to set up a trust in Chiapas, called PROMAYA, that will represent the community and receive royalties from any drugs that Xenova develops.

"The pay-off will be considerable," Professor Berlin says. "We are not screening just any old plants. We are studying ones that have been used successfully by the Mayan people for generations. Whether we find a cure for AIDS or cancer is another question, but it's quite possible."

How the Mayas got high

The Mayas created one of the great civilisations in the unprepossessing Central American jungle. Cities such as Tikal in Guatemala and Chichén Itzá in Yucatan amazed early explorers with their massive temple-pyramids, striking stone sculptures and long inscriptions in hieroglyphics.

Deciphering the dates on these monuments showed that the Mayas reached their peak between AD200 and 900 — roughly coincident with the Roman and early Byzantine Empires — before undergoing a mysterious collapse that left most of their cities abandoned to the forest. Over the past century, hundreds of these cities have been found in Mexico, Guatemala and Belize.

Tikal is estimated to have housed 70,000 people. The urban core of more than a square mile included broad plazas linked by processional ways, and six large temples. One of these, excavated in the 1960s, covered the tomb of a powerful ruler known as K'ahul Kan, who died in AD734 after half a century fighting to preserve the independence of Tikal. Such real history is emerging rapidly from the decipherment of the hieroglyphs.

At the same time, investigation of Mayan culture's economic and social foundations is revealing how this tropical forest people developed and maintained a literate society for seven centuries in such an unlikely place. Pollen in swamp soils shows rainforest destruction by 2500BC and the start of cultivation. Excavations at the oldest-known Mayan community, Cuello in northern Belize, showed that, by 1200BC, many of the foundations of Mayan life were already laid, including agriculture based on maize, beans and root crops such as cassava.

'Lands planted with wine trees' said the Spanish

jar was heated, and just before serving, a load was dropped in. The hufotenin released by its parotid glands acted as a powerful hallucinogen. Mayan pottery vessels show that such drugs were also administered as enemas, bypassing the nausea caused by swallowing. Spanish sources after the 1542 conquest of Yucatan mention 'lands planted with wine trees', as well as the drunkenness of their new subjects. The Roman Catholic Church suppressed much Mayan plant lore.

In recent years, interest has revived: not just from scholars seeking explanations for the abundant depictions of plants in ancient Mayan sculptures and murals, but from those who believe that there is modern knowledge to be gained.

While searches such as Professor Berlin's may well give the world the basis for new drugs, local efforts such as the Pami Medicine Trail or the La Milpa research station in Belize are trying to bring knowledge of plants and their uses back to visitors and the Mayas themselves.

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THE TIMES

SCIENTISTS FOR THE NEW CENTURY

In the first of a new series of lectures starting on Wednesday January 27, Dr Martin Westwell, a young chemist from Oxford University, will describe the war against superbugs. As well as explaining how antibiotics work, he will discuss the frightening prospect that, for the first time in the history of medicine, we have no weapons with which to fight the most deadly infections.

The talk will be introduced by Professor Susan Greenfield, director of the Royal Institution. There will be the opportunity for questions from the audience.

The lecture will be held at 7.30pm at the Royal Institution of Great Britain, 21 Albemarle Street, London W1X 4BS.

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A dousing for dowzers

DOWSING lies right at the ragged edge of science, a hinterland occupied by ideas whose time may be past but which simply refuse to die. There is no plausible mechanism to explain it, but belief persists, aided occasionally by scientific experiments which seem to show that the technique really works.

Among the most painstaking of these were carried out in the 1980s by physicists in Munich, who concluded that most dowzers did no better than chance, but that a few "showed an extraordinarily high rate of success, which can scarcely, if at all, be explained as due to chance".

Nonsense, says Professor Jim Enright, of Scripps Institution of Oceanography in La Jolla, California. He accuses Professor Betz of "wishful thinking" in his interpretation of the Munich experiments which, he says, provide no evidence that dowsing does work.

The experiments were carried out in a barn near Munich. On the ground floor was a 30m length of track, along which a wagon could be moved. Mounted on the wagon was a length of pipe with water circulating through it. For each test the position of the wagon along the track was determined by a random number generated by a computer. On the floor above, the dowzers were asked to work out for each test where the pipe was, without, of course, being able to see it.

From 500 volunteers, 43 dowzers were selected, and they took part in 104 sets of tests, or a total of 843 tests. Most were a failure; the argument centres over whether, as

the experimenters claimed, a minority of dowzers really could detect the correct position of the pipe. This claim, says Professor Enright in the current issue of *Skeptical Inquirer*, rests on the results of seven series of tests out of the 104 actually conducted. Three of these produced very good results, the other four

reasonably good results. The six dowzers involved also took part in unsuccessful tests, which seems to rule out claims that they had special gifts. And Professor Enright works out that even in their successful tests, the dowzers (with one exception) would have been more nearly right had they simply guessed that the pipe was in the middle of

the track each time. "The Munich experiments constitute as decisive and complete a failure as can be imagined of dowzers to do what they claim they can," he concludes.

Professor Betz, naturally, disagrees. He has since been involved in evaluating a ten-year programme, financed by the German Government, to find water in a number of Third World countries.

Not only did dowzers find water, he asserts, but in hundreds of cases they were able to predict the depth of the water source and the yield of the well to within 10 to 20 per cent. "We carefully considered the statistics of these correlations and they far exceeded lucky guesses," he says.

So who's right? Both men claim to be evaluating the evidence scientifically and they reach entirely different conclusions.

Like the water that dowzers set out to find, this one will run and run.

SCIENCE BRIEFING
Nigel Hawkes

LAST year seismologists discovered that the Earth vibrates with a steady hum, far below the level of human audibility. The finding, by several teams including one led by Dr Naoki Suda of Nagoya University of Japan, caused puzzlement and some scepticism.

Geologists have known for nearly 40 years that earthquakes can make the Earth ring like a bell, but there are no few quakes to account for background hum. By the time of the American Geophys-

Tune in to the humming Earth

cal Union's meeting in December, seismologists had accepted that the hum was real, but were still searching for a cause.

Dr Göran Ekström of Harvard has worked out that the hum, which has a frequency of between three and eight minutes, would require an almost constant supply of magnitude 5.8 earthquakes, which occur only once every few days. Dr

Suda believes that winds may be the cause. Science reports. He has found that the hum comes and goes during the day, peaking at any point on the Earth's surface when the local time of day is between noon and 9pm, and weakening between midnight and 6am.

This is the same pattern as intense thunderstorms over Africa and Asia, and means that powerful winds striking the Earth's surface are responsible for the hum — disappointing some seismologists, who would prefer it to be caused by internal activity of the Earth.

Mind the gap

SEVEN years ago two US scientists said that women athletes would overtake men by the middle of the next century in every event from 200 metres to the marathon. But a new study says this won't happen.

In *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, Phillip Starling and colleagues from the Georgia Institute of Technology say that the gender difference in distance running has stopped narrowing.

They used world rankings for 1980 to 1996 to extract the best and the 100th best times for the 1,500 metres and the marathon.

In the 1,500 metres, the gender difference in world best times is 11.1 per cent, in the marathon 11.2 per cent. While the 100th best time for women in the marathon improved in the early 1980s as more women took up the event, the gap with men has stopped narrowing. It is likely, say the team, that these differences will remain fairly constant.

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سكول من لاجل

Oliver's army is here today

Thomas Strathclyde on Blair's Cromwellian Lords reforms

Today the Government will invite the British people to board a train to yet another unknown destination. It will publish a White Paper and a Bill designed to destroy the existing House of Lords and upset the balance between the two Houses of Parliament, without itself having, or declaring, any view of what the long-term powers, functions or composition of the Lords should be. It is hard to imagine anything more reckless or irresponsible.

This Bill is not a reform to regulations on the plucking of the tail feathers of pigeons. It affects the independence of the revising chamber in our Parliament. The Lords is where citizens and businesses are protected against bad law. It is — in the words of its sacked Labour Leader, Lord Richard — "effectively the only place in which the legislature can curb the power of the executive".

Change in Parliament should be effected only after careful cross-party discussion and full public consultation. Instead, in a typical display of arrogance, the Government will plunge on with scarcely a week's "consultation".

This House of Lords has not served the people badly. Indeed, on matters like the absurd beef-on-the-bone ban, the age of consent, the fair treatment of students at Scottish universities and the right of people to vote for a candidate of their choice by name at elections, I suspect the House is closer to the people's idea of what is sensible than the "people's Government".

It is bizarre that when Tony Blair is "relaunching" his Government ready to "deliver" on the schools and hospitals which are fast descending into chaos, his flagship priority is to spend a year on an ideological crusade against hereditary peers.

We would have chosen neither this priority, nor this Bill. But, as with Labour's other ill-thought-through constitutional changes, we have to deal with the situation as we find it. That is why — if they are proposed — we will back Lord Weatherill's amendments to keep 100 hereditary peers in the interim House. This is not a trade union pact to preserve hereditaries. We want to avoid the country being left, indefinitely, with a totally nominated quango.

Hereditaries may seem outdated to modernisers. But it is part of our national tradition and every family's instinct. The fact that peers cannot be "deslected" assures their independence. Something at least as independent should come in their place. I know of no wholly nominated legislature that has any moral authority or standing. Certainly, Lord Irvine of Lairg and Baroness Jay of Paddington are no more "democratic" than I am.

No British politician since Cromwell has claimed the power Mr Blair now hopes to exercise — to determine the party balance and composition of a House of Parliament. The Prime Minister has become sensitive to this charge. He boasts that he will not exercise this huge growth of patronage to the full. He says he will subcontract the choice

of crossbench peers to a new committee. But who will appoint this great and good committee? Mr Blair? To whom will they be accountable? No one. Who will vet the peers they propose? Will the "independent" members they nominate have to declare their political and business links? If someone gave money to Labour years ago, but has never joined the party, could she be a "crossbench" peer? Where would Bernie Ecclestone stand? Could he — who has done so much for motor-racing — be created a crossbench peer?

And what does Mr Blair want of a House of Lords? Unlike the previous Conservative Government, which accepted 40 per cent of its 250 defeats in the Lords, this Government has almost always insisted on having its way. This is true even when they are defeated on the votes of life peers alone. It is not the presence of hereditary peers that seems to rankle with Mr Blair so much as the thought that he might ever be asked to think again.

If the Lords is genuinely reformed, it will be made more powerful, the Commons still weaker. I would welcome a more powerful and independent chamber. But would Mr Blair? If he would, let him say so. He should do as Harold Wilson did on his Lords Reform Bill in 1968-69, come to Parliament and make a statement setting out where he stands and why.

It is still not too late for Mr Blair to shelve his "flagship" measure and to attend to the "real business" of jobs, schools and health. We have forced him to agree to set up a royal commission to look into the long-term future of the Upper House — that was not mentioned in his manifesto.

A commission is a good idea. It should have the widest possible terms of reference. It must have as a chairman a senior judge, whose independence from government cannot be impugned. It should be able to look at the powers, functions and composition of the House. It must look at the fallout from new parliaments and assemblies within our kingdom, and the impact of new Labour's surrender of further powers to Brussels.

It has a great task. In its hand may lie the key to rebalancing our tormented constitution and keeping our country one. In any sane scheme of things this process of thought and consultation would come before Parliament was changed, not after. But in the Walter Mitty world of spin and slogan we now seem to inhabit, action comes before thought. The Government's Bill will strengthen the patronage of the Prime Minister and the power of the executive. It will do nothing to advance the interests of the people Parliament should serve. But then isn't that increasingly the trademark of "new Labour"?

The author is the Tory Leader in the House of Lords.

Brown's Maddox's column will appear tomorrow.



Big bang theorist

Cook's foreign policy towards Kosovo has been reduced to a four-letter word

So what happens now? What has fate to offer the echoing threats of the laptop bombardiers?

Last October the might of the Anglo-American alliance reached a so-called agreement with the Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic. It was a "Saddam", a jerrybuilt, heads-you-win, tails-we-lose deal, which came unstuck in next to no time. Hundreds more Kosovans are dead, tens of thousands homeless and Nato generals are again dancing attendance in Belgrade. The Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, is dancing too. Thumbing his battered lexicon, he incants "deeply foolish... unacceptable... shocking... murderous... horrific". Mr Cook recites all this with sombre mien, looks down at his word list and finds the armoury is bare. His mouth opens and shuts in silence. There is just a ghost whispering in his ear. "Real men drop bombs".

We are back to our old friend, the bomb. British foreign policy is now a four-letter word. So bankrupt is this neo-Palmerstonian stance, so counter-productive to its goals, so devoid of success, that it can only respond to 45 dead Albanians by threatening 45 dead Serbs. Policy is dumbed down to a bomb for a bomb and a corpse for a corpse. Dictators who sneer at Mr Cook's heat-seeking adjectives must feel the blast of his heat-seeking bombs.

Last year Mr Cook and other Nato bosses planned a bombing campaign whose goal was to force Belgrade to stop persecuting the separatist Kosovan Liberation Army (KLA) and to offer devolution without independence to Kosovo. A roughly similar prescription has defeated the Northern Ireland Office for 20 years. It was so unfeasible and unenforceable that the American envoy, Richard Holbrooke, had to race to Belgrade to make smoke for a Nato retreat. Mr Milosevic eats Western diplomats for breakfast. He promised and lied and Nato climbed down.

That October deal was as rotten as a deal could be. Monitors were sent (or rather sent back) to Kosovo without weapons or guards. The atrocities continued, with a horror that seems uniquely Balkan. Serbian withdrawal was a predictable sham. Devolution did not occur. Mr Holbrooke's appeasement of Mr Milosevic was staged to flatter Nato and Western politicians. It merely reassured Belgrade that the West had a big mouth but would not go to war. Yet it emboldened the KLA to think that, as in Bosnia, a few more

atrocities might jolt Nato into taking sides against the Serbs. The October deal sent the worst possible message to everyone. Mr Cook welcomed it. Nato must now decide whether to start the same disastrous round over again. There has been another apparent Serb atrocity in Kosovo. Mr Milosevic has done a Saddam, and expelled a monitor. Britain has declared its patience exhausted and resumed sabre-rattling. There is nothing in the United Nations Charter to give Britain and the

was racked by civil war, invaded by its neighbour Israel and threatened by Syria to the East. Syria was a pariah state whose dictator, General Assad, had mass-murdered his own people, sponsored anti-Western terrorism and destabilised his region. The West decided to save Lebanon from this horror. Interventions from 1982 to 1984 saw American, British, French and Italian troops struggling "to keep the warring factions apart". The carnage continued. The atrocity rate soared. Nothing whatever was gained. The intervention was wholly inept. Western troops eventually withdrew in February 1984, the Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, admitting that Beirut was "too dangerous". Within months, neighbouring Syria took effective control of northern Lebanon. Since then, Beirut has been returning to normal. General Assad is no longer a Saddam-like monster — any more than Saddam himself once was. He is regarded with good favour in Washington, a force for stability, possibly even a Middle East peace-broker.

Lebanon is not Yugoslavia. Any more than it is Bosnia or Iraq. But it offers a crude answer to those who claim there is no alternative to bombing. The alternative to bombing is not bombing. It is to remove the threat of military intervention, as in Lebanon. Many dictatorships in Asia and South America have contrived to make their own way towards democracy without the goad of Western bombs or sanctions. Prosperity, trade, contact and advancing political maturity have been sufficient. All are currently being denied to Belgrade. The thesis that a bombed, isolated, embattled and impoverished Yugoslavia is more, rather than less, sympathetic to Kosovan autonomy defies common sense. The thesis could be held only by an idiot, a Cabinet minister or a large body of "liberal" opinion.



Simon Jenkins

comment@the-times.co.uk

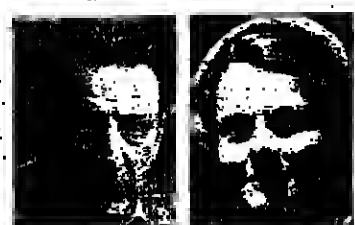


Freud slip

A GUILTY conscience? Lord Goodman — alleged to have siphoned £10 million from Viscount Portman — left a valuable Lucian Freud etching of himself to Christopher Portman, the aggrieved viscount's heir. The vivid scribbling, one of four used by Freud towards a drawing for the National Portrait Gallery, was donated secretly to Portman, to the surprise of friends.

Lady Avon — Anthony Eden's widow who nursed Goodman to the end — admired the works and all assumed that she would inherit one. Instead, Lady A (pictured below with the artist) received 40 volumes of Trollope, poor dear.

Christopher realises how valuable it is. "Lady Portman assures me from Antigua: Why didn't the old rogue leave it to the viscount? 'Oh, I don't think he wanted it.' Wise. Inheritance tax being higher even than lawyers' bills."

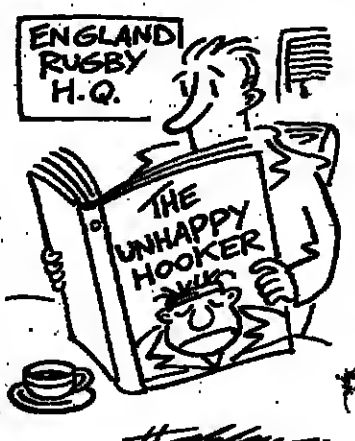


● THE demise of Amanda Platell recalls a recent Spectator lunch when the Express on Sunday Editress fell into conversation with Charlie Whelan about Max Hastings, amiable Editor of the Evening Standard. Max could not last long, they concurred. Perhaps, but rather longer than both of them.

Cover up

LAP DANCING is hitting Hampstead. And the suburbs' PG residents have begun a campaign to remove the joint. Secretly, just yards from South Hampstead High School, Peggy Jay, President of the Heath and Hampstead Society, is rallying her fully clad troops: "I have lived here for 86 years and it is not what we expect." John Humphrys, the grand inquisitor, battles them well, after protesting against Secrets' other club near his Hammersmith bachelor pad. "I am very annoyed about it. I wrote a tough piece excoriating them, but they cut out some phrases and turned them into approval," he said. "We had some success in court though. At least we got the judge to make the girls keep their knickers on." For that, I am sure all residents will be grateful.

● OFF to France to bag honorary degrees: the Archbishop of Canterbury, Cardinal Hume — and Lord St John of Fawley: "I'm the party's nonconformist conscience."



Dance flaw

THE Oxford Union is in a spin. The Austrian Ambassador is coming to its ball. Problem. Union President, Theo Mills, cannot dance; and as the ambassador is a Dr Eva Nowotny, Mills should lead her in the waltz.

Enter the Rev David Johnson who, with a stray count, is teaching the pup. "It is like Steptoe trying to teach his father," wails Johnson.

● PETER MANDELSON is chums with his fellow bachelor, Sir Edward Heath, says Anthony Barnett in Prospect: "Both single. Both meretricious products of suburbs. Both able and obsessive. Each arrogant, lacking popular touch. Poor Peter: an insult too far."

Gay abandon

PLATO should be cited in sex education, says Roger Scruton. Greek love, then? Nope. The distinction between natural and perverted desire plays no part in current education. Plato's teaching, that gays should sublimate their desires, is crucial. "That is what Plato perceived, in his celebrations of the love that bears his name." Can't see it catching on.

JASPER GERARD

'Let us not linger, for a very slightly familiar bald man in a floral pinny has come in to lay for lunch'

Reluctant as I am to offer further confirmation to those of you who feel I should get out more — throw myself into cribbage or Flamenco dancing, find a dog to walk, an instrument to master, a horse to hobby, anything rather than spend any more time woolgathering in my loft — I have to tell you (for it is my curse to do so) that in the summer of AD97,999 it will be possible to dig for wrinkles on Cricklewood beach.

I worked that out after only an hour or so this morning. It is not, of course, what I climbed up into the loft to do, what I planned to do in the loft was have a bit of a think about whether President Saddam Hussein might not in fact be Lord Lucan. They are, after all, identical and of an age, and it would explain much. But

while you may rest assured that I shall return to this theory at a later date, for the time being I prefer to nip forward 96,000 years to the time not yet being, so that I can trot downstairs from this loft, knot a handkerchief about my head, and go for a paddle. Because hardly had I begun investigating the likeliest fugitive route, in 1974, from Belgravia to Baghdad than a wheezing seagull suddenly shrieked outside my window, not merely raising my head from my atlas but also reminding me of a letter to *The Times* a week before, from the Chief Scientist of English Nature. I do not of course mean that it was the seagull's intention to do this. It was just an ordinary shriek. I mean only that my memory was jogged in that marine nano-second to the re-

marks of Dr Keith Duff, who had written to say that the recent erosion of Beachy Head was a natural force, and we should think twice before shoring the coastline up with concrete, learning instead "to live with change rather than always seeking to prevent it".

What could a wool-gatherer do at this recollection but slap shut his atlas and phone English Nature in Peterborough? And yes, though Dr Duff was not at his desk, I did eventually get through to a helpful chap who could answer my question. The answer is that our southern coastline is eroding at roughly a metre a year. So I thanked him,

Alan Coren



opened the atlas again, took a ruler, and noted that the distance between Beachy Head and Cricklewood, as the seagull flies, is 96km. By AD97,999, therefore, the sea will have reached my front gate. Or, rather, 207ft below it, this being my gate's height above sea-level, according to an equally helpful chap at the Ordnance Survey office. My house, in short, will be perched on the White Cliffs of Cricklewood, overlooking a charming little South Coast resort.

Let us come down from the loft now, very slowly, three millennia a step, and look about us. See, my dining room contains not one large table but four small ones,

each with a bottle of HP Sauce chained to it, and a jug of plastic cornflowers, and a cruet set engraved "Seaview Boarding House". The walls once hung with pictures now sport framed notices: "Please Do Not Take Towels To Beach And Oblige" and "After Meals Ensure Your Serviette Is Replaced In Ring Provided". Let us, though, not linger, for a very slightly familiar bald man in a floral pinny has just come in to lay for lunch, and it is time for us to pop outside.

Oh, look, a fine summer morning, the sea-mist lifting to reveal Hendon Pier and the Edgware Lightship bobbing beyond, and the cheery strains of *William Tell* wafting up from the bandstand below, gilded gem of that fine broad

promenade which stretches all the way from Golders' Cove to Wembley Bay. Focus the big brass telescope standing on Seaview's fetchingly groomed front lawn, and what do we see? We see beach huts, and wheelie-stalls, and ice-cream carts, and striped wooden deckchairs, we see little ones cross-legged on the sand, hooting at Punch and Judy, and large ones wrapped in towels struggling to remove their trousers, we see pedalos and donkeys and a motor-boat rocking lazily beside a blackboard offering trips to Funchley Island.

How reassuring it all is! How right Dr Duff was to urge us to live with change, for nothing really changes! Even though, as we step away from the telescope, a tiny piece of cliff beyond our feet breaks off, and falls.



HAGUE'S IDENTITY

Strong themes will achieve little without policy detail

Only a brave politician is willing to explore issues of identity and what it means to be British. As William Hague conceded last night, there used to be something very un-British about trying to define who the British are. The consequences of that embarrassed silence has been that a few, mostly academic, observers have been able to portray the United Kingdom as an artificial creation, built from opposition to Frenchmen and Catholics and lacking any form of coherent cultural core. It was partly that charge that the Conservative leader sought, in a well-crafted and eloquent address, to confront.

Mr Hague's willingness to undertake this task is welcome and his arguments are persuasive. A country that is about to undertake an era of intense constitutional change needs to have some sense of itself before deciding what sorts of institutions it seeks to abolish, change or create. The force of Mr Hague's text was also apparent in an effective rebuke to those within his party who would abandon Scotland outright and seek to expand and exploit an emerging sense of English nationalism. The dangerous flirtation of the Shadow Cabinet with an English Parliament is at least at an end.

The Tory leader sought to draw distinctions between Britain's democratic traditions and those that pervade continental Europe. He did so not in a tone of splendid isolation or arrogant superiority but as a matter of simple fact. It is indeed the case that, as Mr Hague asserted, "where we invest our national identity in our political institutions, many other European countries have been let down by their political institutions within living memory". For that reason the constitutional implications of close integration within the European Union are more profound and more destabilising for Britain than for almost all of our neighbours.

This was also, however, a coded speech about the Conservative Party as well as the wider country. Mr Hague emphasised the

need for Conservatives to accept Britain in its modern form rather than wallow knee-deep in nostalgia. He acknowledged that his party had created the impression that it was "obsessed with economics" and implied that in future it would seek to fight on other fields, notably cultural and social values. He pointed in broad terms to the policy review ahead.

That examination should, in truth, have started already. The public still has little idea about what parts of the Tory past Mr Hague is willing to repudiate, still less what new ideas might be adopted. The Conservative Party listens to Mr Hague's message of change and inclusiveness and applauds politely. There is not much evidence that it is willing to undertake reform on anything like the scale that its leader rightly recognises must be done.

As a result, the Tory thinking appears to be on hold as Mr Hague awaits some movement in the polls that will in turn allow him more space for manoeuvre. Able spokesmen such as Ann Widdecombe and David Willetts have been put in high-profile posts but with precious little new that they are permitted to articulate.

There is a twofold danger in this strategy. Either the voters will not return to the fold without a clearer signal that the Conservatives have repented, or any small upward shift in public opinion will be seized upon by some in the parliamentary party as an alibi to postpone fundamental change once again.

Britain may not suffer from an identity crisis: but the condition of the Conservative Party is far less certain. It continues to be seen by a stark majority of voters, representing the last, discredited administration, not the official Opposition, and certainly not an alternative Government. Three years ago, when John Major invited a challenge to his leadership, his opponents responded with the prophetic slogan "no change, no chance". Those words are equally relevant to Tory policy today.

RETURN OF THE KING

As Jordan celebrates, it speculates

They danced in the streets, sang and cheered. The airport was filled with flags, bagpipers and banners and a million people lined the narrow streets of Amman to welcome their King. In all his 47 years on the throne, King Hussein of Jordan has never known a homecoming like this.

Returning after six months' abroad, intensive cancer treatment and a taxing negotiating session to clinch the Wye accords, the King could scarcely contain his emotion. He is the world's longest-serving executive ruler in one of the world's most turbulent regions. Jordan is a country largely fashioned, held together and given patriotic substance by its monarch. The relationship has not always been easy: King Hussein has survived numerous assassination attempts, coup plots, uprisings and attacks by his neighbours.

He has been isolated in his support for the West, reviled by opponents of the Hashemite dynasty and denounced by Arab nationalists. He has seen his advisers murdered, had to give up claim to the West Bank and lost administrative control of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem. Yet he has brought a stability and prosperity to a country that has provided an oasis of moderation in a harsh desert of hatred. Jordanians know that they have been better ruled than any of their Arab neighbours. A quarter of the population filled the streets to give him a rancorous welcome. No drummed-up applause by vain dictators has matched anything like it.

Yet there was a poignancy to his return. The King has been proclaimed cured. He

does indeed look better than the pictures of the shrivelled, bald figure who helped President Clinton get to agreement on an Israeli withdrawal last autumn. But the King himself already speaks of the time when he will no longer rule Jordan.

Like John of Gaunt, looking with prophetic eye at the future, the King has awoken speculation about his successor. For years his youngest brother, Prince Hassan, has been the designated Crown Prince. After taking over day-to-day decision-making, he has ruled as regent for the past six months. On the whole, events have run smoothly during this time. But throughout Jordan there is recognition that the Oxford-educated Prince, a man short in charisma but long in verbosity, lacks the agility of his brother. He is a respected thinker, committed to peace with Israel. But in times of crisis he fails to inspire his countrymen.

Already destabilising rumours of dynastic struggle have begun. There is talk of rival aspirations for future succession between the sons of King Hussein and Prince Hassan and intrigue by their mothers. The King is thought now to hope that the Crown will pass directly to his 18-year-old son Hamza, who has impressed those around him with his charisma and young resemblance to his father. Any such change, however, could unleash corrosive ambitions that have so far been held in check in this extended family. The utmost delicacy is needed for any change, a quality for which the King has long been noted. It could be his last, most important service to his country.

FARMING FASHIONS

Diversity is agriculture's best option

Yesterday the Commons Agricultural Select Committee published a report on rural development. Agriculture, it recognised, is no longer the mainstay of rural society. Only through diversification will farmers find the means to survive. Some four fifths of Britain is currently farmed. The agricultural industry constitutes an important resource of land, capital and local knowledge. But it still remains largely untapped.

Farmers are notoriously sceptical of change. Long after hundreds of Londoners have made a scrum through the organic stalls of Spitalfields market part of their weekend shopping routine, the leader column of *Farmers Weekly* belatedly announces in the current issue that "organic systems have come of age". The staid publication, in large part financed by the advertising of agrochemical industries, reflects a significant shift in farmers' attitudes as it condones organic "muck and magic" as a "serious profit-generating operation". Battered by the beef ban, Asian market collapse and an over-strong pound, even the most traditional British farmers are looking to new initiatives as they struggle to save their businesses from bankruptcy.

Many are diversifying their stock and crop mixes. Deer, ostriches and alpaca are raised on land where cattle and sheep once grazed. Lupins and linseed are grown alongside cereals. High quality, locally

labelled food finds a specialist but growing market, and farm retail shops and kitchen restaurants are opening all over the country. Other farmers are catering for the tourist trade as barn conversions and caravan sites provide accommodation. Pets corners attract children. Miller mazes and rural cemeteries make more unusual options.

But diversification is not an instant panacea. Farmers hold one of the nation's most precious commodities in their safe-keeping, the landscape. Fields planted with plastic cloches may shield rows of delicate lettuces from harsh Welsh winds, but they despoil valley views. Off-track driving may bring extra income, but it destroys rural peace. The countryside is not a playground.

Farmers are the stewards of moors and mountains, fields and fens. But this stewardship comes at a price. While many wait for the European Union to come to its senses with a system of CAP reform that will not just benefit big producers, the British Government must help to tide low-intensity farmers over difficult times. The subsidies it offers must be far more specifically targeted — not simply directed at the end product. They must be meted out in such a way that they help to protect the lifestyles of those such as hill farmers whose traditional agricultural practices preserve the beauty of the British landscape as we know it now.

Call to close secure training centres

From the Social Policy Manager of The Children's Society

Sir, The Government's announcement that it intends to send in the riot police to control children at the Medway Secure Training Centre in Kent shows, as your report of January 14 rightly points out, how illusory the progressive dreams of the secure training centres (STCs) have proved. In fact, the centre should never have been built.

If those of us who work with disturbed and damaged children are going to make a difference to these children's lives we need to provide small units where children will respond to individual attention. Put a large group of damaged and disturbed children together and you have a tinderbox. Bad behaviour inevitably breeds worse behaviour.

The Children's Society made these views clear when the centres were first announced under the previous Government, as did magistrates, other children's charities and penal reform groups. In opposition, a member of the current Government described them as "colleges of crime". Despite these warnings, the Government not only opened Medway STC, it is planning several similar centres.

This Government has talked a great deal about individual responsibility. To provide an unsuitable service to these disturbed children and then to threaten to send in the riot police is an abnegation of its own responsibility. It is iniquitous for this Government to turn round and blame disturbed children who have been left in an institution that is known to be failing them.

The only solution to this problem is to close down the secure training centres in favour of small units which can respond to these damaged children as individuals.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER SMITH,
Social Policy Manager,
The Children's Society,
Edward Rudolf House,
Margery Street, WC2X 0JL,
January 14.

Kosovo's children

From the Deputy Director of Unicef UK

Sir, As dozens of vulnerable women and children flee Kosovo (letter, January 19), Kosovo's children — both Albanian and Serb — are again caught in the crossfire. They are at risk not only from mortars, but also from silent killers like pneumonia, typhoid, hepatitis, and the highest incidence of polio in Europe.

Visiting Kosovo, even during the ceasefire, I found severely traumatised children. They were untypically quiet, too scared to play, and racked with bronchitis and acute respiratory diseases. The fragile peace enabled the launch of an immunisation campaign, restocking of health centres and restarting of education.

Yet last week, even before the Račak killings, our field workers were repeatedly prevented from reaching outlying areas. Now we fear that the explosive political climate will trigger greater uncertainty and deprivation for children. It is hoped that the politicians negotiating peace and aid for Kosovo will put the needs of children — for shelter, medicines, education and safety — first.

Yours sincerely,
MARIE STAUNTON,
Deputy Director,
Unicef UK,
55 Lincoln's Inn Fields, WC2A 3NB,
January 18.

A doctor in the House?

From Dr C. J. Barrow

Sir, Having clearly stated: "I have a degree and a PhD", Ms Dawn Primarolo was asked by Valerie Grove (interview, January 9) why she didn't use the title of Doctor.

She replied: "Because I didn't actually submit my thesis... but my excuse is that two years into it I was elected".

Given the earlier claim, this is rather like saying I have a GCSE but failed to sit the exams.

Yours faithfully,
CHRIS BARROW,
20 Coed Mor,
Derwen Fawr, Sketty,
Swansea SA2 8BQ,
January 9.

Many happy returns?

From Prentis Hancock

Sir, Mr J. R. Callin is at liberty to look forward to any set date he chooses for the return to their homelands of exiled Scots and Welsh (letter, January 15).

In the interim, he might like to consider the effects on the world, let alone on Britain, should the Scottish diaspora decide to up sticks and return to their clans.

Who would run things? Westminster might be hard put to find a Cabinet.

Yours ay,
PRENTIS HANCOCK,
Flat B, 10 Tadmira Road,
World's End,
Chelsea, SW10 0NU.
prentis@worldend.u-net.com
January 15.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Hume's relationship with Carey

From Mr Martin Pendergast

Sir, I suspect Cardinal Hume will have raised an eyebrow, one of his more common gestures of disapproval, when reading Ann Widdecombe's perception of Anglican-Roman Catholic relations report, "Hume denies he has contempt for Carey", January 14.

Behind the simple Benedicite image of the cardinal is a consummate yet sensitive politician, a quality which Miss Widdecombe might seek to emulate.

I suggest her view of the cardinal's appreciation of the Archbishop of Canterbury reflects more her disaffected Anglican outlook and the axes which she continues to grind.

Yours sincerely,
MARTIN PENDERGAST,
57 Lyme Grove, E9 6PX,
January 14.

From Sir Robin Day

Sir, In an extract from the new book about Cardinal Basil Hume which you printed with special prominence on January 14, the cardinal is said to have described in 1977 how he had been interviewed by me about celi-

bacy, in a way which was "potentially embarrassing".

This, insofar as it refers to me, is untrue. I have never interviewed the cardinal. I am informed that he was astonished, as was I, to read this story.

The author, Mr Neil Balfour, has apologised to me for his mistake. He appears to have confused my name with that of some other interviewer. Whoever did the objectionable interview, it was definitely not me.

Yours truly,
ROBIN DAY,
Garrick Club, WC2E 9AY,
January 15.

From Mr Richard Willmott

Sir, How unfortunate it is that Ann Widdecombe cannot emulate her hero and let her contempt for the Archbishop of Canterbury never be "publicly discernible".

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD WILLMOTT
(Headmaster),
The Dixie Grammar School,
Market Bosworth,
Leicestershire CV13 0LE,
January 14.

Legal basis for 'presumed consent' of organ donors

From Professor Margaret Esiri and others

Sir, There is another aspect to the question of donors' "presumed consent" (letters, January 13). This concerns the use of tissue for research rather than for transplantation.

We are engaged in research that aims to increase understanding of schizophrenia by studying brain tissue from sufferers after death (and tissue from healthy persons unaffected by this devastating disease, for comparative purposes). This is extremely difficult to acquire, largely because permission is needed from next-of-kin at a time when they are likely to be distressed by their recent bereavement.

Some doctors and nurses understandably hesitate to ask for this permission for fear of increasing distress or because they are unaware of the need for such tissue.

If there was legislation that enabled tissue to be made available for medical research as long as no objection

had been made known, research such as ours would receive a considerable boost and improved understanding of schizophrenia and other brain diseases be brought that much closer.

Yours sincerely,
MARGARET ESIRI
(Professor of Neuropathology,
Oxford University),
TIM CROW
(Professor of Psychiatry,
Oxford University),
PAUL HARRISON
(Reader in Psychiatry,
Oxford University),
Schizophrenia Research Group,
Radcliffe Infirmary,
Oxford OX2 6HE.
margaret.esiri@clinical-neurology.oxford.ac.uk
January 14.

From Dr David W. Evans

Sir, The presumption of consent to anything seems to me to be a very dangerous development and I wonder

The Jacqueline we remember

From Mr Julian Lloyd Webber and others

Sir, *Hilary and Jackie*, a film purporting to chronicle the life of cellist Jacqueline du Pré and based on a book by her brother and sister, is to be released this week. It concentrates heavily on an affair which Jacqueline had with her sister's husband and portrays her as selfish, spoilt and manipulative.

This is not the Jacqueline du Pré that we, as her friends and colleagues, knew.

Jacqueline possessed a wonderful joy in making music and a unique ability to bring that joy to her audience. This is the Jacqueline du Pré that we remember.

Yours,
JULIAN LLOYD WEBBER,
YEHUDI MENUHIN,
ITZHAK PERLMAN,
WILLIAM PLEETH,
M. ROSTROPOVICH,
P. ZUKERMAN,
c/o JMG Artists,
Media House,
3 Burlington Lane, W4 2TH,
January 18.

Owners' rights

From Mr Neil Howlett

Sir, Anthea Lawson's amusing article (Weekend, January 9) about Mr Sam Gratton, who intended to purchase the lease of a flat in southeast London which he then discovered to be situated above a brothel, raises an interesting issue for lawyers and all potential purchasers of a house or flat.

The buyer of a detached house may have no easy redress against anti-social neighbours. However, the buyer of a flat in a building or of a house in a development can and should acquire rights to prevent any such misbehaviour, and the lease should include "covenants" (promises) designed for that purpose. So should the transfers of houses on any well prepared estate development, giving the owner the right to take action directly against other owners who break restrictions on the use of their property.

At the very least, tenants or owners should have the right to require the

freeholder or developer to take action against other tenants or owners.

The kind of restrictions imposed will normally prohibit illegal or immoral activity, although this may not always help those in a similar position to Mr Gratton: prostitution in itself is not illegal, so a prostitute operating alone is not breaking the law. However, anyone living with the prostitute and living off his or her earnings will be.

Causing nuisance — such as excessive numbers of or abusive visitors, especially at odd hours — may also be prohibited. So may running a business. In most cases the covenants will restrict such activities, not only by the owner but those permitted by the owner. The key to success is to have records taken at the time which will prove the case.

Yours sincerely,
NEIL HOWLETT,
Harris and Harris (solicitors),
11 Stony Street,
Frome, Somerset BA11 1BU,
January 10.

Advance intelligence

From Mr Robert Vincent

Sir, The news that their Government has ordered Chinese airline bosses to fly on New Year's Day in order to calm passengers' trepidation about the millennium bug (report, January 16) must surely be welcomed in Europe.

China's midnight comes some seven or eight hours before ours: so if their millennium bug causes anything to go wrong we'll be sure to hear of it pretty quickly, and consequently have plenty of time to land safely ourselves.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT VINCENT,
Dilly House, Wildern,
Andover, Hampshire SP11 0JF,
January 16.

Wigs for judges

From Mr Andrew Mier

Sir, In claiming that wigs make judges appear out of touch with the country inhabited by the litigants (report, January 12, Sir Richard Scott, Vice-Chancellor of the Supreme Court, is presumably referring to civil litigation).

In criminal cases, where the defendants have a choice, most who contest the charges elect trial before a Crown Court judge who wears a wig, rather than before magistrates who do not.

Perhaps the lesson is that litigants are more concerned about the perceived quality of justice in the courts than in fashionable ideas about dressing to be in touch with the world.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW MIER,
Gray's Inn Chambers,
Gray's Inn, WC1R 5JR,
January 12.

Millennium Bart

From Dr Morley Halse

Sir, Seeing the Simpsons featured in Saturday's meg@ section of *The Times* serves to remind us that the year 2000 is significant only as a result of a long process of evolution that has given us four fingers and a thumb on each hand.

If, like Bart Simpson, we had four digits per hand, base eight arithmetic would be universal.

Next year would then be 3720 and so nothing particularly special.

Yours sincerely,
MORLEY HALSE,
6 Ashbee Gardens,
Herne Bay,
Kent CT16 6TU.
m.r.halse@uk.ac.uk
January 11.

From His Honour Anthony Tibber

Sir, I have just retired from the circuit bench. For many years I wore a wig when entering court (that was my concession to convention) but removed it in the early stages of the proceedings and sat for most of the day bareheaded. Some counsel glared and kept their wigs on, others, with a sigh of (I think) relief, took them off.

I know of no power and no authority which can tell a judge that he or she must wear a wig. If those judges who wish to get rid of the wig simply ceased to wear them, most of the remaining judges would probably follow suit.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY TIBBER,
22 Holmwood Gardens, N3 3NS,
January 12.

Letters may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Drink-drive limit

From Mr Peter McKellican

Sir, Last April I was banned from driving for a year. I had been 50 per cent over the limit — not roaring drunk, but I know the law and it was a "fair cop".

I travel widely in Europe, and I endorse your sentiments (leading article, "Know your limit", January 8) that, far from following any perceived lead from Europe by lowering our limit, we should seek to persuade our European partners to adopt some of our policies. Every time I explain my predicament to European business partners, be they French, Dutch, Spanish, Italian or German, they are astonished by our 12-month minimum ban.

I am sure that the success of drink-driving campaigns in Britain is largely due to the quite correct severity of the punishment. Our hard-hitting television campaigns are non-existent in France. Their limit may well be lower than ours, but if anyone were arrested and found to be slightly over it, they would in reality face a maximum ban of three months.

As a nation, our attitude to drinking and driving has changed for the better. Long may this continue. The attitude in much of mainland Europe has not and, until they follow our lead, will not.

Yours faithfully,
PETER MCKELRICAN,
105 Knighdon Church Road,
Leicester LE2 3JN.

Something to chew on

From Dr R. J. S. Chinn

Sir, "I bet my ear to a bag of sweets," says Mr Mike Burton, former England prop forward (report, January 19), that the dispute between the Rugby Football Union and the Five Nations Committee will be short-lived.

Given the state of most prop forwards' ears, I know I for one would rather have the bag of sweets.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER CHINN,
86 Beryl Road, W6 8JU,
r.chinn@eac.uk
January 19.

Problem shelved

From Major-General I. S. Harrison, Royal Marines (ret)

Sir, Mr R. J. Slade (letter, January 18) reports finding Worcestershire sauce in a supermarket food section headed "Mexico".

In my post-retirement capacity as Director General of the British Food Export Council, I visited a supermarket in southern Italy, where I found Birds Custard on shelves reserved for petfoods.

Yours sincerely,
I. S. HARRISON,
Manor Cottage, Runcorn,
Cheshire, West Sussex PO20 6PU,
January 18.

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TODAY

AtHome

Inflation
increase
leads to
fears of
delay in
rate cut

BA
£7b

ans lift
to 41%

THE TIMES

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Janet Bush finds it hard to be scared about a recession

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20 1999

AtHome creates Web giant with £4bn deal

FROM OLIVER AUGUST
IN NEW YORK

ATHOME, the Internet service provider controlled by AT&T, yesterday agreed to buy Excite, the loss-making Internet search company linked to BT, for \$6.7 billion (£4 billion) in the biggest online merger.

The combination overcomes the \$4.2 billion link-up of America Online and Netscape, announced last

November, now worth about \$6.6 billion after the recent surge in Internet shares. Online consolidation is expected to drive technology stocks to new heights and valuation records.

The AtHome-Excite merger also marks the deepening of the alliance between BT and AT&T. The two transatlantic telecom leaders last year agreed to expand their traditional phone service in tandem but stopped short of a merger. BT owns

a 50 per cent stake in Excite UK, which it acquired for \$10 million. Under the terms of the deal, AtHome will issue 1.04 of its shares for each Excite share, valuing them at \$106.22, a 57 per cent premium to the last closing price. At the start of trading yesterday, shares jumped to \$106 before falling back to about \$95.

According to the agreement, the deal will be whisked through and is supposed to be completed in three

months. The completion would almost coincide with the closure of the \$32 billion AT&T takeover of TCI. The cable company is AtHome's biggest shareholder.

The Excite acquisition forms part of AT&T's new strategy to belatedly seek leadership of the Internet sector. Michael Armstrong, the executive chairman appointed last year, tied the phone giant's future to new media with the TCI deal.

Mr Armstrong hopes to build an integrated media and telecoms company that delivers phone services and Internet content via the same hardware. With TCI, he acquired the hardware link to the Internet, while Excite will now form the content backbone.

Excite has a range of free websites offering news, chat rooms, retailing and listings. The company earns revenue from advertising on the edges

of the company screens. It has never made a profit. In the third quarter of last year, it had revenues of \$44 million.

These statistics have made some Wall Street analysts sceptical about the deal. Rick Berry, an analyst at JPTurner, said: "I have trouble seeing a \$1 billion market cap for Excite. They're overpaying for it but that's characteristic of anytime we are in a mania."

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	6027.8	(-96.3)
Yield	2.71%	
FTSE All Share	1270.73	(-37.96)
Nikkei	13770.44	(-34.82)
New York		
Dow Jones	9262.49	(-88.05)
S&P Composite	1238.32	(-3.54)

US RATE

Federal Funds	4.75%	(unch)
Long bond	5.11%	
Yield		

LONDON MONEY

3-mth interbank	5.4%	(5.4-5.4)
Life long go		
future (Mar)	119.31	(119.36)

STERLING

New York	1.6553*	(1.6529)
London		
\$	1.6586	(1.6518)
£	1.4294	(1.4291)
¥	113.27	(114.57)
€	168.55	(168.79)
£ index	93.9	(93.7)

US DOLLAR

London		
£	1.1806*	(1.1800)
¥	1.3751*	(1.3608)
€	113.27	(114.57)
£ index	104.3	(104.5)

Tokyo close Yen 114.06

MONTHLY SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Apr)	\$11.20	(\$10.95)

GOLD

London close	\$285.75	(\$286.95)
Exchange rates		
* denotes midday trading prices		

Inflation increase leads to fears of delay in rate cut

By ALASDAIR MURRAY
ECONOMICS
CORRESPONDENT

INFLATION unexpectedly climbed above target in December, raising fears that the Bank of England may delay further interest rate cuts.

The annual rate of underlying inflation, which excludes mortgage interest payments, increased from 2.5 per cent in November to 2.6 per cent, the first time it has breached the target level since last July.

However, headline inflation continued to decline, reaching 2.3 per cent compared with 3.0 per cent the previous month, as mortgage costs continue to slide.

The chief cause of the rise was an 11 per cent jump in seasonal food prices. Household goods prices also climbed as retailers tried to push through pre-Christmas price rises.

The figures pushed the pound higher. The euro fell to 69.99p against sterling, its lowest closing level, while the pound rose from \$1.6515 to \$1.6583.

The data, coupled with the problems in Brazil, helped to depress the stock market, with the FTSE 100 closing down 96.3 points to 6,027.8.

City analysts and business groups were quick, however, to claim the figures were a blip and that the Bank should not hold off from making further rate cuts.

Kate Barker, chief economic adviser to the CBI, said: "We expect inflation to move below the Government's target and believe interest rates should be reduced towards 5 per cent by the spring."

Separate data showed a larger than expected public sector net cash requirement of £3.2 billion in December. Economists said, however, that the Government remains on target to post a healthy full-year surplus.

Commentary, page 25

Bae under attack after £7bn merger with GEC



High-fliers: Lord Sippson of Dunkeld, chief executive of GEC, parent group of Marconi, left, and Sir Richard Evans, chairman of British Aerospace

BRITISH AEROSPACE was yesterday hit by accusations that its £7 billion merger with the Marconi Electronic Systems arm of GEC has damaged British, German and French Government hopes of greater industrial co-operation within Europe.

British Aerospace shares also fell nearly 14 per cent, wiping about £750 million from the original value of its bid, and claims it had overpaid.

The Marconi deal will create the world's third-biggest aerospace company by sales, behind Boeing and Lockheed Martin of the US.

Before Christmas, Bae had been in merger talks with Dasa, the German aerospace group owned by DaimlerChrysler, but these were left behind when GEC emerged as a willing suitor.

Yesterday, the jilted Dasa gave warning: "If the Bae/GEC merger proceeds as announced, it will make balanced European horizontal mergers such as Dasa-Bae impossible and create an obstacle to European integration."

One analyst at a London broker said the decision to link the

two British companies would delay European consolidation. The UK Government is keen for cross-border alliances to be formed.

GEC will demerge Marconi. Electronic Systems before selling it. GEC shareholders will then exchange their stake in Marconi for 1.17 billion new shares in Bae - about 36.7 per cent of the merged group, which will be known as New British Aerospace.

They will also get about £440 million of loan stock. Marconi will also be loaded with £1.55 billion of net debt, releasing cash to the rump GEC group, which will focus on telecommunications and electronics.

Lord Sippson of Dunkeld, the chief executive of GEC, played down speculation that

By ADAM JONES

GEC might bid for Bae's telecommunications arm. He will have £2.657 billion in cash for acquisitions and said yesterday that it is his intention to create a business twice the size of "old GEC" before he retires.

Lord Sippson, 56, is better known for disposing of businesses than buying them. He managed the sale of Rover to BMW when at British Aerospace. He said: "I hope people are going to see the business development side of George Sippson." Low-growth businesses at GEC, such as its Hotpoint washing machines arm, will be placed in a new division, GEC Capital.

Bae responded to claims that it had overpaid by saying the deal should lead to annual

cost savings of £275 million by the third year, although there will be a one-off £200 million cost to achieve this. Marconi Electronic Systems had sales of £3.685 billion in 1998, making a profit of £418 million before tax and interest. Bae still wants to merge with Dasa.

New British Aerospace will employ about 100,000 people and have a turnover of £12.4 billion and profits of £968 million on 1997 figures. John Weston, chief executive of Bae, said few job losses were likely. Earnings per share should be enhanced by more than 10 per cent in the third year with neutral effect in the first year.

GEC will keep the Marconi brand name. Michael Lester and Sir Charles Masfield will join Peter Gershon, the Marconi Electronic Systems manag-

ing director in moving from the GEC board to the New Bae board.

Michael Blogg, an analyst at Charterhouse Tilney, said: "I think Bae has paid a full price but strategically I think they can justify it." Panmure Gordon, the broker, said it welcomed the deal.

Another analyst, who preferred not to be named, said Bae had "very much" overpaid: "A fairer price would have been £6 billion."

It is not yet clear whether the European Commission or the UK Government will have jurisdiction over the deal.

It is understood that the Government will refuse to say that the merger will escape a referral to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in answer to a parliamentary question tomorrow.

It is also not yet clear how much will be paid to the advisers on the deal. Bae employed Dresdner Kleinwort Benson and Goldman Sachs. GEC employed Warburg Dillon Read and Morgan Stanley.

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Europe cries foul, page 27

Grid looks for £1.2bn from sale of Energis

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY
INDUSTRIAL
CORRESPONDENT

NATIONAL GRID is to raise £1.2 billion by selling a chunk of Energis, the telecoms company, in a move that will fund a rapid expansion in the US and other overseas markets.

It could spend £500 million of the proceeds as early as next month on an electricity business in Massachusetts. Stephen Box, finance director, revealed that the company, which controls electricity transmission, was close to a second purchase in New England after its £2.7 billion takeover of New England Electricity System, which was announced last month.

The sale of up to 75 million shares in Energis - in which the Grid has a 75 per cent stake - should net about £800 million profit for the company and will be in two tranches. The Grid will simultaneously convert its Energis preference shares to ordinary shares and reduce its holding to between 45 per cent and 49 per cent.

The sale has been prompted by the soaring value of telecoms shares and the wish to bring more liquidity into Energis.

Energis shares, which were floated in December 1997 at 230p, leapt from £15.22 to £16.55. National Grid shares rose 18p to 545.5p.

Tempus and markets, page 26

Mirror calls for two valuations

THE Mirror Group board has called for two independent valuations of the company to set a base line for takeover negotiations (Raymond Soddy writes).

The valuations of the group, whose titles include The Mirror, Sunday Mirror and The People, should be available before the end of this week.

The bid approach by Regional Independent Media, publisher of the Yorkshire Post, suggests a value of about £900 million, a figure that does not include debt. Trinity, a rival regional newspaper group, withdrew from bid talks with Mirror Group earlier this month.

Brazilians lift interest to 41%

By GABRIELLA GAMINI AND ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE Brazilian Central Bank yesterday lifted interest rates as the Government vowed that it would not let Brazil's currency devaluation undermine its battle against inflation.

The rise in the bank's key lending rate, from 29 per cent to 41 per cent, dashed hopes of the bank cutting rates to kick-start the world's eighth-largest economy.

International markets responded nervously, with Wall Street falling sharply after a bright opening. The Dow Jones Industrial average was down about 75 points at midday. The French and German markets ended modestly down, and the dollar came under pressure as traders switched into "safe haven" currencies, such as the Swiss franc.

The Brazilian currency, the real, slipped to about 1.61 to the dollar, before stabilising at

1.59, some 24 per cent below its trading range ahead of the currency float.

However, Brazilian shares, which have risen by 40 per cent since the Government chose to float the currency on Friday, recovered from early falls to gain about 2 per cent.

Pedro Malan, Finance Minister, said the interest rate rise was intended to avoid a return to inflation while the Government tried to get tough fiscal reforms through Parliament.

Economists gave warning, however, that the rate rise could push the economy further into recession and threaten the health of neighbouring countries. The move could also make it harder for the Government to cut its budget deficit because it will have to pay more to service its debt.

Commentary, page 25

Sunshine back at Club Med

By MARTIN BARROW

PHILIPPE Bourguignon, the Frenchman credited with rescuing Euro Disney, appears to have pulled another ailing leisure company back from the brink.

Club Mediterranée, the resort group, yesterday reported a return to profit after attracting thousands of tourists back to its fun-in-the-sun holiday villages.

Price cuts of up to 30 per cent, renovated resorts and some new destinations have revitalised Club Med. The group had seemed to have been struck a fatal blow by a new generation of resort companies - and the changing tastes of tourists, who were deserting beaches in search of activity holidays in exotic spots.

However, M. Bourguignon has proved doubters wrong. His strategy pulled in 116,000 extra customers last year, a

rise of 27 per cent, despite a temporary cut in capacity because of renovations. In the 1997-8 financial year, Club Med renovated 17 resorts and opened four new resorts, two in France and one each in Tunisia and Egypt.

Club Med reported operating profits of FF386 million (£41.2 million), against a FF104 million loss the previous year. M. Bourguignon believes that Club Med can double operating income by 2000.

He said: "I am more than ever confident in the future of Club Mediterranée, and especially in our ability to meet the objective of FF700 million to FF750 million in operating income in 2000."

Club Med's shares rose almost 6 per cent on the Paris bourse as its income beat the market's consensus forecast of FF160 million.

Maggots, food of the cods?

By SAIED SHAH

THE VAT man is having to roll up his sleeves and get to grips with maggots.

The VAT Tribunal, having determined that a Jaffa Cake was a cake and not a biscuit, must now rule whether maggots could be considered to be food. The outcome could have a significant financial bearing on the pet food and animal feed markets.

The tribunal is considering an appeal by an Essex company trading as Mag-it, a supplier of live maggots for anglers. The company, whose slogan is "Bait-it with Mag-it" had argued that maggots were food, food because fish eat them and, as a result, should be zero-rated for VAT purposes in common with most animal feeds.

But the VAT man disagreed, saying the primary purpose of maggots was not to feed the

fish but to attract them so they could be caught by fishermen.

Mag-it sells the live maggots from vending machines on garage forecourts. For £2, you can buy a pint of maggots, with 2,938 maggots to the pint. They come in a choice of eight different colours.

Hugh Mainprice, of Mainprice & Co, the solicitor acting for Mag-it, argued that fewer than 1 per cent of the maggots are actually used on the hook as bait and so they must be considered animal feed.

The original hearing, before Tribunal chairman Jill Gort, was shown a video of Bob Nudd, three times world champion carp angler, throwing handfuls of maggots, at regular intervals, into the water while fishing as "feed". Mr Nudd said that it could take several hours of this to get the fish "excited".

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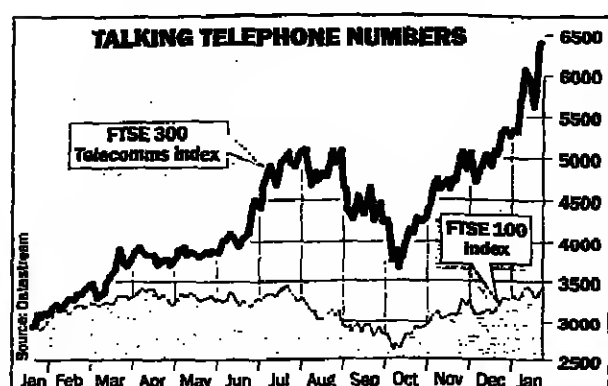
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AXS TELECOM

Why now looks a good time to hang on to telecoms



By CHRIS AYLES

INVESTORS in telecom companies such as Vodafone, Orange, BT, Colt and Energis face a dilemma. Do they sell now in the belief that share prices cannot be sustained at current high levels or hold tight and hope that this is simply the beginning of an exciting long-term trend?

Before making a decision on whether to hold on to telecoms stocks, investors should consider the shockingly brief stock market history of Itonica, the Cambridge telephone company. Itonica was valued at £660 million following its much-hyped flotation during the summer of 1997, and collapsed only 15 months later. Yet few big telecoms companies suffer from the managerial and

technical problems that caused Itonica's downfall. The growth of companies such as Colt and Energis are also fuelled by markets that Itonica was never poised to take advantage of — in particular, the Internet, e-mail, corporate intranet systems, and e-commerce (transactions conducted online).

So far, this demand comes mainly from the business world, but will soon be complemented by consumer demand as more people hook-up to the Internet at home, and subscribe to interactive television services. If all this looks like a good reason to buy into the telecoms sector, it looks like an even better

reason to buy into the mobile telephone sector. All the signs so far suggest that the market penetration of mobile phone companies will double within four years to 50 per cent in most Western countries.

At the same time, new technology will allow mobile phone companies to also cash-in on the demand for data. Conducting a video conference via a mobile phone handset looks set to become a reality within a few years.

It is worth remembering, however, that companies such as Colt and Energis, whose share prices are based entirely on profits that have not yet been

made, are very different to the likes of Vodafone and BT. During a crash, shares in Colt and Energis would be highly vulnerable, as investors tend to pile into cash-generative companies such as supermarket chains and cigarette manufacturers.

However, all the evidence would suggest so far that the likes of Colt and Energis can survive stock market volatility. After all, it will take years for the demand for Internet-related services to be satisfied, and for the glamour surrounding companies in the sector to wear off.

Continued, page 25

Anger as RJB asks miners to reject EU rights

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

RJB MINING has asked all its miners to sign away employment rights under the EU's Working Time Directive. The move has provoked further anger as the company faces two union ballots for industrial action in protest over a pay plan.

The company asked its 6,800 miners to "take steps to work their normal hours". This means signing an opt-out clause from the Working Time Directive, which rules that workers should not work more than 48 hours per week. Those who stick to their rights are likely to see their pay cut.

RJB said that some miners work extra hours on a standard 7½-hour shift and undertake overtime shifts to push their working weeks regularly past 50 hours.

Nacods, the pit deputies' union, claims that its members are being pressurised by RJB and are being accused of an overtime ban when they are only exercising rights under the directive, which came into force last October.

The union said that safety could be jeopardised because pit officials were often required to work seven days a week to provide adequate cover in collieries.

Jan Parker, the president of the union's Yorkshire area, said: "This union will not sit idly by and watch its members being victimised by RJB Mining."

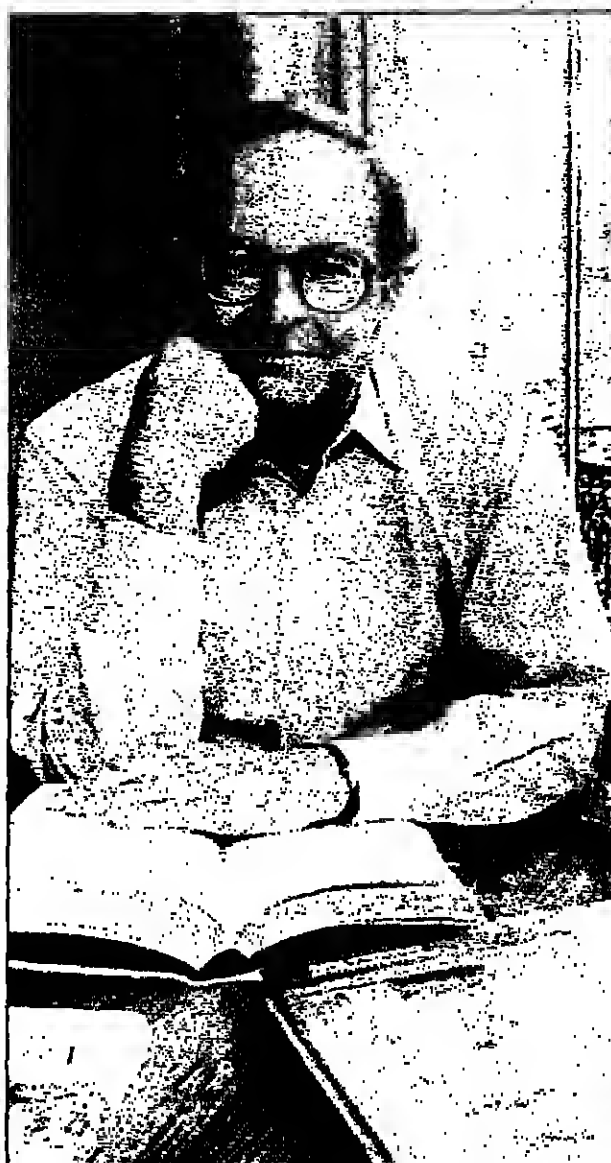
"If the company wishes to enter into the spirit of the Working Time Directive and negotiate on it, the union is always willing to listen, but up

to the present time, the company has only taken a one-sided view."

RJB said that it had had some positive responses to its letter, mainly from the Midlands area. A spokesman said that the company wished to continue normal hours and that Richard Budge, its chief executive, was anxious for miners to spend more time with their families.

RJB employees will vote next month in ballots that could trigger the first miners' strike for 15 years. Both the National Union of Mineworkers and the Union of Democratic Mineworkers are balloting their members on possible action.

RJB has offered a pay rise of inflation minus 1 per cent for five years. Miners have pointed to the wide gap between their offer and Mr Budge's pay in 1997 — the latest published figure for his salary. He earned £610,000 that year, including a bonus of £224,460, despite a 75 per cent slump in RJB's share price and a 9 per cent fall in profits.



Sir Peter Davis said that the figures were creditable

Pru sees 13% rise in new business

By RICHARD MILES

PRUDENTIAL yesterday reported a 13 per cent rise in UK new business to £785 million, largely reflecting the first-time inclusion of a full year from Scottish Amicable, the life insurer it acquired 16 months ago for £2.8 billion.

Scottish Amicable, which distributes its products through independent financial advisers, contributed £163.5 million in weighted premiums (regular premiums plus 10 per cent of single), a rise of 24 per cent year-on-year.

However, Prudential's traditional direct sales new business was unchanged at £306 million. Salesforce numbers have fallen to 3,200 from 4,600 from the start of the year.

The Pru also said that Egg, the innovative banking service launched last autumn, had attracted £1.3 billion in deposits. Total banking deposits at the company now amount to £22 billion, while mortgage advances have grown to £500 million.

Sir Peter Davis, group chief executive, said the figures were a "credible performance" against a background of economic uncertainty.

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Struggling Mitsui Trust to merge

TWO troubled Japanese banks are to merge as the country's financial sector edges towards further reform. Mitsui Trust and Banking is to merge with Chuo Trust and Banking to form Japan's largest trust bank with assets of about £241 billion and 170 branch offices. Mitsui Trust is by far the larger of the two banks and ranks as the third biggest of Japan's trust banks, which are in charge of managing pension funds.

Many of Japan's top banks, saddled with huge bad loans, have struggled in the past year. Already the Government has forcibly nationalised two banks after they failed to agree merger deals with rivals. Nippon Credit Bank, the last bank to be taken over by the state, had tried to merge with Chuo Trust. But Chuo pulled out, apparently scared off by Nippon's market losses and poor financial position. Under reforms passed last October, banks have been encouraged to ask for injections of taxpayers' money to help them to write off bad loans. Mitsui will ask for about £1.1 billion, while Chuo will seek £691 million.

Hanson looks to US

HANSON, the Anglo-American building materials group, could spend £200 million on acquisitions over the next year or so, focusing its growth strategy on the buoyant US market. Andrew Douglas, chief executive, yesterday said that he expected the US market to continue growing, helped by a government programme to increase spending on infrastructure projects by 40 per cent over the next six years. The group yesterday unveiled a new unified corporate structure, changing the name of each of its operating companies to Hanson.

Debenham Tewson up

DEBENHAM TEWSON & CHIMMOCKS HOLDINGS, the property consultancy, said that it is confident of continued progress in the second half of its year despite uncertainties in the UK and abroad. The company reported pre-tax profits of £4.68 million for the half-year to October 31, up from £3.16 million a year earlier. The interim dividend rises to 15p, from 13p. Turnover was £45.98 million (£36.73 million). Earnings per share were 5.29p (4.26p).

Victory losses deepen

VICTORY CORPORATION, the clothing, cosmetics and toiletries retailer which trades under the Virgin brand, said it was unlikely to open additional outlets this year in the light of difficult trading conditions. The company reported increased losses of £10.9 million for the half-year to September 30, compared with a £3.5 million loss previously. The company attributed 40 per cent of the deficit to a £4 million investment in the launch of its clothing business.

Eidos shares surge

SHARES in Eidos rose 65p to £1.65 yesterday after the publisher of entertainment software reported exceptionally strong demand in the three months to December 31. The company said that it had supplied in excess of six million units, well ahead of expectations. Titles released in the quarter included Michael Owen's World League Soccer, Tomb Raider 3 and Thief: The Dark Project. Eidos shares have recovered strongly since touching a 12-month low of 55p in October.

Dagenham accepts bid

DAGENHAM MOTORS, the UK's biggest dedicated Ford car dealer, has accepted a £28.3 million takeover bid by Polar Motor Group, a joint venture between Ford and Jardine Motors. The 160p-a-share cash offer represents a 33 per cent premium to Dagenham's stock market value last September when a potential offer was announced. Dagenham has 16 Ford car and van dealerships and three Iveco Ford commercial vehicle dealerships in the South East of England.

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ECB remains vague on rates

By ALASDAIR MURRAY, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE European Central Bank yesterday warned that global economic problems could hit Europe harder than expected but gave few clues as to the immediate outlook for European interest rates.

In its first monthly bulletin, the ECB stuck to its favoured formula that rates would remain unchanged for the "foreseeable future", arguing the threat of higher inflation is as significant as slowing output.

The negative repercussions of recent global developments on economic growth in the euro area could turn out to be more serious than currently anticipated", the report said.

The ECB said it was clear from recent data that economic growth is slowing and said industrial confidence had declined "significantly". However,

it insisted that that loose fiscal policies and rising wages could still add to inflation.

"Wage demands in excess of labour productivity growth and a relaxation of the fiscal stance in the euro area could represent sources of inflationary risk in the future", the report said.

The ECB also cited a potential inflationary threat from buoyant consumer confidence but concluded that the overall outlook "for price developments in the euro area can be regarded as broadly balanced".

Analysts said the ECB appears intent on providing only limited guidance on interest rates but that there was nothing in the report to prevent a widely forecast cut in rates as early as next month.

US brokers and banks resilient

By RICHARD MILES

WALL STREET banks and brokers performed ahead of analysts' expectations in the fourth quarter, despite volatility in financial markets and uncertainty about the global economic outlook.

Merrill Lynch, the biggest broker in the US, reported a 23 per cent fall in fourth-quarter net earnings to \$359 million (£216 million), but the results easily beat the consensus forecast by more than 30 per cent.

However, Merrill said that private client assets, assets under management and mergers & acquisition activity all hit record levels.

Principal transactions revenues slumped 66 per cent to \$211 million. Merrill said continuing wide credit spreads and reduced liquidity contributed to losses in corporate and

high-yield bonds, as well as mortgage-backed securities.

Chase Manhattan also exceeded market expectations with a 35 per cent rise in fourth-quarter net earnings to \$1.146 billion. Net profit per share was \$1.31 compared with banking analysts' forecasts of \$1.19.

It was the same story at JP Morgan, where fourth-quarter earnings were 42 cents per share against a forecast of 35 cents, and at PaineWebber, where earnings were 63 cents per share compared with a consensus of 54 cents.

Bear Stearns reported a 15 per cent drop in second-quarter net earnings to \$135.9 million as investment banking fees collapsed, but the firm managed to beat forecasts, which had been scaled back after the summer's financial turmoil.

Unigate buys Fisher subsidiary

By ROBERT COLE CITY CORRESPONDENT

ALBERT FISHER, the troubled food producer, has sold its saucemaking business to Unigate for £43 million.

Fisher, which has issued a string of profits warnings in recent years, also told investors yesterday that its profitability is under further strain. Hugh Ashton, chairman, said: "Management figures for the first four months of the current financial

year are substantially below the like-for-like figures for the comparable period."

Proceeds of the sauces sale will be used to cut group debt, which was £147 million at the end of the last financial year, on 31 August. The sale is the first significant corporate move undertaken since Terry Robinson, formerly with Lorrain, took up the position of chief executive at Fisher.

Mr Robinson said that the sale of Fisher Quality Foods would be followed by other disposals, of the company's seafood

operation on the Continent, and of the chilled foods business. He said: "The sale... is the first major step in Albert Fisher's strategic plan to reduce group debt and restore shareholder value."

FQF's purchase price includes assumption of £16 million of debt, and is equivalent to almost ten times the subsidiary's £4.4 million operating profit for 1998.

Fisher shares closed down 4p at 54p.

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Bank	Rate	Bank	Rate	Bank	Rate	Bank	Rate
Australia	2.65	Spain	12.50	USA	5.75	UK	5.75
Austria	10.00	Sweden	6.00	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50
Belgium	90.00	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50		
Canada	2.50	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50		
Cyprus	0.875	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50		
Denmark	11.25	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50		
Egypt	5.00	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50		
Finland	9.00	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50		
France	9.00	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50		
Germany	2.50	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50		
Greece	1.00	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50		
Hong Kong	13.50	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50		
Ireland	12.00	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50		
Indonesia	1.75	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50		
Israel	1.35	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50		
Italy	7.00	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50		
	2945	Switzerland	3.25	Yemen	12.50		

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Simpson's chance to build, not sell



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Forget plans to create a European defence giant: what is needed now is a peace-keeping force. Relations between the British and German participants in the much discussed Euro-grouping have soured to the extent that Kade Adie is likely to be parachuted in to report on the hostilities at any moment.

The furious reaction of DaimlerChrysler's Jürgen Schrempp to the British Aerospace deal with Marconi indicates that his view of the balance of power in any Euro defence combine might not have concurred exactly with that of Sir Richard Evans. Sir Richard will now have to indulge in a little diplomacy if he wants to persuade the Germans and the French that the wisdom of them all joining forces remains intact. He will have to be extra tactful not to remind them that he is making the case from a much stronger position than before. Injured feelings are likely to ensure that the timetable for any formal coming together is now significantly lengthened.

But neither the Continental peevishness nor the British stock market's reaction over the £8 billion merger does anything to detract from the reputation of Lord Simpson of Dunkeld as a seller of businesses. British Aerospace might not have been in a position to do the deal if he had not, as the culmination of his time with the group, sold Rover to BMW. It took him barely any time to turn

Lucas into LucasVarity, a deal which Victor Rice seems convinced was a takeover by any other name. Now, after a couple of years at the helm of GEC, he is selling its defence business to his old firm.

The two form a logical combine but by not rushing to clinch the deal, Lord Simpson has secured a better price than he might have done. The protestations from Germany owe more to a little to the feeling that Dasa has been a useful part of his negotiating process rather than a serious contender to complete the deal.

The challenge of building a future in the highly competitive defence business now rests with Sir Richard Evans. Given that Gordon Brown is unlikely to favour throwing extra billions at the UK defence budget, that will be no easy task. Given that the biggest orders are more likely to come from far flung parts than from Europe, it could be argued that he would do as well to try and pursue links with the United States rather than Europe.

Lord Simpson will be blissfully free of the political considerations that inevitably dominate the defence business. He intends

to roam free around the world building new GEC. It will, naturally, be a telecommunications business — who would want to build anything else at the moment? And it will be the test of whether he can build businesses as well as sell them.

Lord Weinstock was absolutely determined that Simpson would be his successor. Now the chosen one has a chance to demonstrate the talent he spotted.

Just what the doctor ordered

Mobile phones may suddenly have become a subject of intense interest round at Zeneca's Stanhope Gate headquarters. Received wisdom has it that no one will seek to spoil Zeneca's £45 billion merger with Astra — partly because Sir David Barnes and Tom McKillop are so gaily with their Swedish chums, but also because

of the goodwill problem that stands in the way of any hostile takeover. A bid would produce £30 billion of goodwill, creating an annual amortisation charge to profits of perhaps £1.5 billion. Even the mighty Glaxo Wellcome and Roche would think twice before taking on such a millstone.

However, the enthusiastic response that greeted Vodafone's £37.5 billion bid for AirTouch may have changed the rules of the game. Vodafone's investors seem to have completely ignored the prospect of an annual charge of £2 billion, focusing instead on the strategic benefits backed by strong and growing cashflow. If mobile phone investors are prepared to ignore the profit and loss account, perhaps Zeneca is more vulnerable than it looks.

Goldman Sachs, Zeneca's adviser, remains quietly confident its carefully prepared merger plans will not be thrown off course. For one thing, analysts and investors in the go-go tele-

coms sector are more comfortable with heavily loss-making companies than their more staid colleagues in pharmaceuticals, who still focus on traditional measures of earnings.

More compellingly, acquiring Zeneca (or Astra) may lack strategic logic for the possible bidders. Zeneca is too small to enable Glaxo Wellcome to achieve its growth goals; SmithKline Beecham is still licking its wounds while Roche appears to have ruled itself out of the bidding. And American companies such as Eli Lilly and Warner-Lambert may not be attracted by firms with patent expiry problems that are heavily dependent on the slower growing European market.

The Astra-Zeneca bond has been slowly forged and may be hard to break: the two companies' claims to a shared culture ring true. Combining their portfolios of cardiovascular and anaesthetic drugs also makes sense.

The betting remains that the deal will go through and that Dr McKillop will have his chance to run the world's third-largest drugs group. But as Zeneca prepares to issue its merger document, he could be forgiven for fumbling nervously with his Vodafone.

Brazil should say nuts to depression

Brazilians doubtless hope that devaluation will ease the pain endured in their vain attempt to maintain the value of the real and to keep foreign investors happy. They even look to the UK experience after 1992 for reassurance.

If so, they will be disappointed. Their suffering from shrinking public services, mass firing and even freak weather, which tempted populist provincial governors to dish the austerity programme, seems destined to get worse — at least for a while.

The classic adjustment model, which worked here, suggests that Brazil should now cut interest rates but tighten its fiscal stance even further to sustain the currency and leave room for non-

inflationary recovery. But so far, short-term interest rates have jumped from 29 to 40 per cent, while those provincial governors and opposition legislators seem far from inclined to help Finance Minister Pedro Malan to balance his federal Budget. This appears to be a recipe for spiralling recession on the Asian model.

One reason the Government was so anxious to avoid the real sinking was the country's heavy foreign debt, both private and public. City economist Stephen Lewis reckons that servicing it could absorb an extra 4 per cent of national income, that could only be recouped if domestic interest rates fell. Now, unless the Budget can be righted by political consensus or a national fire sale, Brazil could stay in crisis, taking others with it.

Self-inflicted

DON'T blame potatoes. Furniture and household goods' retailers, it seems, pushed prices up before Christmas, perhaps ending autumn discounts, perhaps preparing for bigger percentage cuts in the sales. Either way, it could be costly. The price rises pushed underlying inflation above target, making it far less likely that the Bank of England will rush through another base rate cut next month. That would be bad news for household goods shops, heralding spring discounts to recoup lost sales. Serves them right.

Watchdog demands rights for savers

Consumers need "a no-quibble legal right to redress" if they buy a personal pension or savings plan that does not come up to scratch, a leading public rights group demands in a report published today.

The National Consumer Council (NCC) says that the draft Financial Services and Markets Bill, which will give statutory powers to the new regulatory body, fails to provide adequate protection for the buying public.

David Hatch, NCC chairman, argues that the Bill should contain a set of consumer protection principles, similar to those that underpin the 1979 Sale of Goods Act. The public has more legal clout if sold a faulty kettle than if a pension or insurance policy fails to meet accepted standards.

GPE debenture

Great Portland Estates, the property group, yesterday announced the issue of £100 million first mortgage debenture stock due in 2029. It will be issued at a 1.35 per cent margin over the gross redemption yield of the 6 per cent Treasury stock 2028. Richard Peskin, chairman, said: "We have one or two interesting situations on the go. This seemed an ideal opportunity to raise £100 million for 30 years at the lowest domestic coupon for decades."

Zergo shares soar

Shares in Zergo Holdings, the company that produces software to encrypt information sent over the Internet, soared 30 per cent to 702½p after signing a licensing agreement with Intel Corporation, the US microchip group. Zergo will market Intel's Common Data Security Architecture (CDSA) technology, which allows software developers to make trading over the Internet secure. Zergo shares traded at just 165p last December.

Key Lekkerland

Goodwins, the Key Lekkerland member for the North West and West Midlands that was recently acquired by BWG, does not operate Spar or Mace retail outlets (Business News, January 9).

Somerfield to expand chain at Elf garages

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SOMERFIELD, the supermarket group, is to double the number of its stores offering home delivery over the next six months, and it is planning a big expansion of its chain of stores at petrol stations.

The company, which bought Kwik Save last March and announced better than expected interim results yesterday, said that it is to open up to 50 stores at Elf petrol stations in the next 18 months. There are currently five Elf stores and Somerfield will share in an investment of £25 million.

Somerfield's home delivery service, in which people buy their shopping in stores and have it delivered later that day, now operates in 150 stores, a rise of 90 in six months. The total will rise to 300 by the financial year's end. Assuming that Somerfield had owned Kwik Save in the first half of last year, group interim pre-tax profits rose by more than 30 per cent to £113.8 million. Reported pre-tax profits before exceptional items rose 100 per cent, from £56.8 million.

David Simons, the chief executive, said that Somerfield is in line to produce the forecast savings from the Kwik Save merger, of £70 million a year, within three years. Within the half-year, synergy savings of £7 million had been made, the company said.

The company has now converted ten of Kwik Save's 872 stores to the Somerfield format, and will convert 53 more by Easter. It has shut 14 stores in total in the first half, and the group now trades from 1,423.

Fully diluted earnings per share fell from 17.3p to 16.8p, but the interim dividend is to rise from 3.8p to 4.5p.

Like-for-like sales in Somerfield fascia stores grew 3.4 per cent in the first half, but by just 1.7 per cent at Christmas. Mr Simons said that this dip in growth tended to occur each year because people made trips to superstores, such as

Tesco and Sainsbury, to stock up for Christmas, rather than relying on high street shops such as Somerfield.

Kwik Save sales fell 3.1 per cent in the first half. The group said it expects the trend to stay negative, particularly because preparing stores for conversion to the Somerfield format will disrupt trading.

Dawn Til Dusk Holdings, a supermarket and fresh food group, said like-for-like sales rose by 0.23 per cent at Christmas, with year-to-date sales 0.73 per cent behind last year.

In the six months to October 16, pre-tax profits rose to £316,000, from £301,000, on turnover up 25 per cent to £32.6 million. Earnings per share fell to 4.4p, from 5.6p, which was attributed to effects of a rights issue. The interim dividend is 1.5p, up from 1.4p.

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Cult classic Thunderbirds, part of the ITC library, which has doubled Carlton's collection

Carlton is go with £91m ITC library deal

By RAYMOND SNOODY, MEDIA EDITOR

CARLTON Communications has boosted significantly its library of television programmes and feature films with its £150 million (£91 million) purchase of the old ITC library, until recently part of PolyGram Filmed Entertainment.

The titles bought range from feature films such as *The Eagle Has Landed*, *The Big Easy*, *On Golden Pond* and *Farewell My Lovely* to television programmes such as *The Saint*, *Edward VII* and *Thunderbirds*.

The stock more than 300 films and 5,000 hours of television boosts the size of Carlton's library by more than 50 per cent, and, Carlton said, strengthened its position as "the world's largest commercial distributor of British television programmes and films".

The ITC library became available because of the purchase of PolyGram, including PolyGram Filmed Entertainment, by Seagram.

The library ended up with Universal Studios, the Seagram film-making subsidiary.

Carlton kept close to poten-

tial bidders for PolyGram Filmed Entertainment but really only wanted to buy the ITC library, which was put together by the late Lord Lew Grade.

Michael Green, the Carlton chairman, said yesterday the ITC library "fits perfectly with our growing collection of television programmes and films".

A key part of Carlton's strategy has been to accumulate programme rights and its library already includes the Rank, Romulus, Rohauer and Korda collections.

Carlton said the new library, expected to have sales of about £8 million to £10 million a year, would be at least earnings-enhancing in the current financial year.

Carlton's annual report, published yesterday, showed Mr Green's salary increased by £55,000 to £530,000 in the year to September. His total remuneration rose from £558,000 to £658,000, including a £57,000 bonus.

The next highest paid director was June de Moller, who is retiring as group managing director, with total remuneration of £351,000.

Body Shop hit by poor sales

By MATTHEW BARBOUR

BODY SHOP, the cosmetics retailer, yesterday became the latest victim of disappointing high street sales, when it gave warning that Christmas trading in the UK would put a dent in full-year profits.

The company said that like-for-like sales in the ten weeks to January 2 were down 2 per cent. There had been a 6 per cent decline in the UK and a 9 per cent decline in America.

Patrick Gournay, chief executive, also revealed that he would be announcing long-awaited plans for an overhaul of the group on Tuesday, prompting speculation of a carve-up of its US operations. City analysts slashed their full-year profit forecasts from

£13.5 million to as low as £25 million.

Mr Gournay said the slowdown in UK sales reflected the wider slowdown in retailing over the holiday period and that sales in Europe, the Far East and Canada were improving. However, sales in Asia remained on a downward slope, though a 9 per cent drop in sales represented an improvement on recent double-digit decreases.

Worldwide, Body Shop saw sales rise by 1 per cent in the ten weeks to January 2 and by 3 per cent over the preceding 4 weeks. "The poor performance in the US will be offset by our cost-reduction scheme," promised Mr Gournay.

Still optimistic at Debenhams

By MATTHEW BARBOUR

STRONG sales of gifts and non-clothing products and a decision to delay discounts until December 27 helped Debenhams, the department store group, to withstand the worst of the high street gloom over Christmas.

The group said that in the 20 weeks to January 16 like-for-like sales, excluding sales from new store space, were down 2.5 per cent on the previous year.

However it added that the figures would have been considerably worse without a 30 per cent jump in Christmas gift sales as well as strong growth in designer lines. Total sales were ahead by 1.4 per cent.

Peter Jarvis, the chairman, said: "The retail trading environment remains challenging and it is difficult to predict how it will develop over the next few months. However, we remain confident with our well-established and proven strategy."

Debenhams was demerged from Burton Group, now Arcadia, a year ago.

Arcadia, which includes clothing chains such as Top Shop, Dorothy Perkins, Primaries and Raging Green, will release its own trading statement tomorrow.

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Boost for Energis on the eve of promotion

THE City institutions have got themselves in a mess over Energis, says a leading analyst. National Grid is selling up to 75 million shares in order to drop its stake below 50 per cent.

Brokers were testing the water ahead of the placing yesterday. Once it is complete, Energis will be catapulted into the top 100 companies where it will be valued at £3.7 billion.

Unfortunately, most institutions do not have anywhere near the weighting in the shares they would require for a blue chip. The price looks set to climb higher in the short term. National Grid rose 17p to 545p.

Share prices generally went into reverse, worried by the latest rise in Brazilian interest rates and turnover, by suggestions that the latest inflation numbers had undermined the prospect of another cut in domestic rates by the Bank of England.

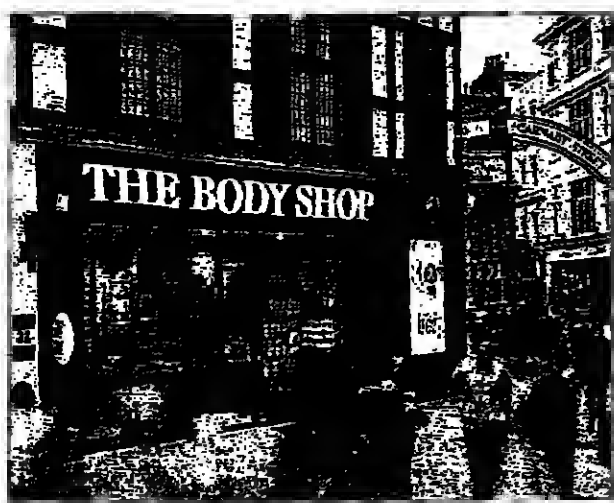
Early losses on Wall Street left prices in London deep in the red although UK shares closed above their lows. The FTSE 100 index lost an early lead but managed to stay above the 6,000 level. It closed 96.3 down to 6,027.6. Turnover again exceeded more than a billion shares with the FTSE 250 index losing 29.2 to 4,874.6.

Brokers and fund managers expressed a degree of caution over the British Aerospace acquisition of GEC's Marconi defence arm for £7.7 billion. BAE was the worst performer among the top 100 with the price losing 69p to 435p, while GEC shed 31p to 546p.

Now the speculators are tipping GEC to bid for Racal Electronics, up 18p to 386p. There has been plenty of speculation in Racal shares in recent months with followers convinced that outgoing chairman Sir Ernest Harrison is ready to go out on a high note.

This week's gloomy trading update from Nestlé could have an impact on rival Unilever, 51p easier at 648p. The Swiss group reported signs of a slowdown in its main markets during the fourth quarter.

Cautious comments by HSBC Securities, the broker, about prospects left Diageo 11p down at 670p. It has reiterated its "sell" recommendation and set a target price for the shares of 540p. There was big turnover in merger candidate Lasso with the price rising 3p to 103p as several large lines of stock went through the



Body Shop retreated 4p to 85p as brokers cut their forecasts for the current year in the wake of a profits warning

market. They included two parcels of 7.6 million at 9.16 million at 102p. By the close of business a total of 20.6 million had been traded. Enterprise Oil, which is merging with Lasso, eased 4p to 255p.

Hopes of a bid drove House of Fraser up 15p to 88p. City speculators say the department stores group could go the same way as rival Sears, unchanged at 348p, which is facing a contested bid from a consortium headed by retailer Philip Green. Both companies have several things in common — they have Phillips & Drew as a major shareholder and have seen their share price under pressure.

Phillips & Drew is also playing a big role in the fate of Mirror Group, 1/2p dearer at

206p. It has rejected a cash bid of 200p from Regional Independent Media and would prefer to back an all-share offer from Trinity International, up 1/2p to 431p.

Body Shop retreated 4p to 85p in the wake of its profits warning. Brokers, who had already cut their numbers after a gloomy trading update in October, had the red pencils out again. SG Securities is cutting its profits forecast for the current year from £31.5 million to £28 million.

Selling pressure also left Boots 43p down at 88p as BT Alex Brown, the broker, cut its profit forecast from £593 million to £554 million blaming a sluggish Christmas.

Shares of AIM-listed On-Line soared a further 39p to a peak of 172p as the clamour for Internet providers showed few signs of subsiding. The price has now risen more than tenfold in less than two weeks.

Over on AIM, the high-tech buyers were chasing Virtual Internet. It follows the reverse takeover of Charriot, which was suspended at 117p in November. The price touched a peak of 382p before closing at 311p, a rise of 19p.

The bulls are falling over themselves to pick up more shares in Zargo Holdings, 162p dearer at 702p. The information and technology specialists clinched two separate deals with Price Waterhouse Coopers, the accountant, and Intel, the microchip manufacturer.

Senior Engineering was an early casualty losing 6p to 99p as one seller unloaded a line of 1.17 million shares at 97p.

GIILT-EDGED: The prospect of another cut in interest rates suffered a setback after news of an unexpected rise in the underlying inflation rate. The bond market gave up an early lead with rate-sensitive, shorter-dated issues suffering heaviest losses as prices closed mixed.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt fell 5p to £119.31 as a total of 31,000 contracts were completed.

Among conventional issues, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 put on 32p to £151.30, while at the shorter end Treasury 7 per cent 2002 was 17p down at £107.73.

NEW YORK: Caution on Brazil and profit-taking in the banking sector forced shares lower in morning trading. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was down 88.06 at 9,252.49.

STORM CLOUDS GATHER

THERE was a mixed response in the insurance sector to another round of profit downgrades.

CGU fell 30p to 881p as Morgan Stanley Dean Witter cut its forecast of operating profits for 1998 from £562 million to £500 million, blaming bad weather and higher claims.

Charterhouse Tilney, the broker, has also reduced its forecast by 19 per cent to £500 million. Both Charterhouse and Morgan Stanley have taken their red pencils to profit forecasts for Royal

& Sun Alliance, up 5p to 481p. They have cut from £470 million to £382 million and from £419 million to £381 million respectively.

CGU and RSA both reported a profits downgrade at the nine-month stage in November, which prompted a revision of profit numbers in the sector.

Allied Zurich retreated 14p to 915p, but Guardian Royal Exchange was steady at 348p still awaiting terms, thought to be of about 390p a share, from AXA, the French insurer.

STOCK MARKET

NEW YORK (midday): Dow Jones 9,252.49 (-88.06) S&P Composite 1,239.32 (-3.94)

Tokyo Nikkei Average 13,770.44 (-34.62)

Hong Kong Hang Seng 10,280.11 (-112.43)

Amsterdam AEX Index 548.88 (+4.67)

Sydney All Ordinaries 2,865.8 (+25.0)

Frankfurt DAX 5,073.15 (+22.75)

Singapore Straits Times 3,457

Brussels C2X 3,478.22 (+7.58)

Paris CAC 40 4,115.89 (-35.89)

Zurich Swiss 1,442.30 (-8.80)

SEA Com 142.30 (+0.80)

London: FTSE 100 6,027.6 (-96.3) FTSE 250 4,874.6 (-29.2)

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Little time left for a recession

Those of us old enough to remember the last two British recessions with acute discomfort are unfazed about the current economic slowdown.

For this columnist, the early 1980s recession coincided with my departure from university and entering the jobs market for the first time. I remember deciding not to read newspapers for the last six months of my university life because headlines about mass unemployment were worrying enough to put me off all thoughts of Shelley, Blake and Virgil. The next recession will forever stick in the mind because of the catastrophic rise in interest rates that were needed to stop the preceding boom at a time when many people of my age were borrowed up to the hilt in our desire to become part of Margaret Thatcher's home-owning democracy. Between the day, in the late 1980s when I signed my mortgage contract and the first monthly payment, interest rates had risen alarmingly by 2 per cent.

It is hard to be scared this time around. For all the doom-laden

talk of recession and high-profile job losses, employment is at a record, vacancies are only just below their recent historic highs and unemployment has only recently begun to edge higher.

Interest rate movements have been decidedly modest in recent times, ensuring that consumers have not been ambushed as they were last time round. In this cycle, rates moved from a trough of 5.25 per cent in February 1994 to a peak last June of 7.50 per cent, a range of only 2.25 per cent if rates fall no further. This compares with the previous cycle in which rates bottomed out at 7.50 per cent (the peak this time) in May 1988 and doubled to 15 per cent in October 1989, a range of 7.50 per cent.

Newspaper headlines, industrial confidence, surveys, retailers' press releases may all be as dramatically woeful as they have been

on the brink of past recessions but all the germane economic indicators tell a story of much greater stability, far less economic imbalance, a much shallower cycle and a relative lack of macroeconomic policy mistakes or misjudgments by consumers and businesses.

Take all this evidence together and it is difficult to mount a convincing argument that Britain is in for a recession severe enough to be given the name. Indeed, unless events turn very nasty overseas and remain nasty, a case can be made for a shallow, short-lived downturn or, as the Treasury and the Bank are guessing, none at all.

One of the biggest changes from past cycles is the behaviour of inflation. Despite yesterday's news of a blip up in underlying inflation — due partly to bad weather boosting food prices and partly because of furniture retailers raising prices



(and losing sales as a result) — inflation is extremely tame compared with previous cycles. In the late 1980s, inflation reached 10 per cent. During this cycle, inflation has hovered between 3 and 4 per cent. Much has been made of the "consumer boom" in 1997 on the back of demutualisation windfall gains. But consumer spending has been positively anaemic despite the windfall billions. Consumer spending has grown by an average of 2.8

per cent a year since the trough of the recession in the second quarter of 1992. This compares with a growth rate of 8.1 per cent in the first quarter of 1988.

Let us briefly look at the housing market, so crucial to the 1980s boom and bust. According to the Halifax, house price inflation peaked in 1997 at 7 per cent. The Nationwide put the peak at 13 per cent. Neither of these figures compares with the 35 per cent increase in house prices recorded in the year to October 1988.

Another measure of the relative health of the economy is the financial position of households and of companies. Both are far less indebted than they have been at the onset of previous recessions. In the late 1980s, the personal sector racked up debts worth 3 per cent of gross domestic product. By the third quarter of last year, the per-

sonal sector was still running a surplus, albeit a relatively small one of 1.1 per cent of GDP. Non-financial corporations were carrying a financial deficit of 2 per cent of GDP in the year ending in the third quarter of 1998. This compares with a deficit of some 5 per cent of GDP at the start of 1990.

It is not just people and companies who have behaved far less profligately in the current cycle than in the previous one — scared no doubt by the mess they found themselves in when interest rates doubled. Since 1992, successive Chancellors have proved to be careful stewards of the public finances.

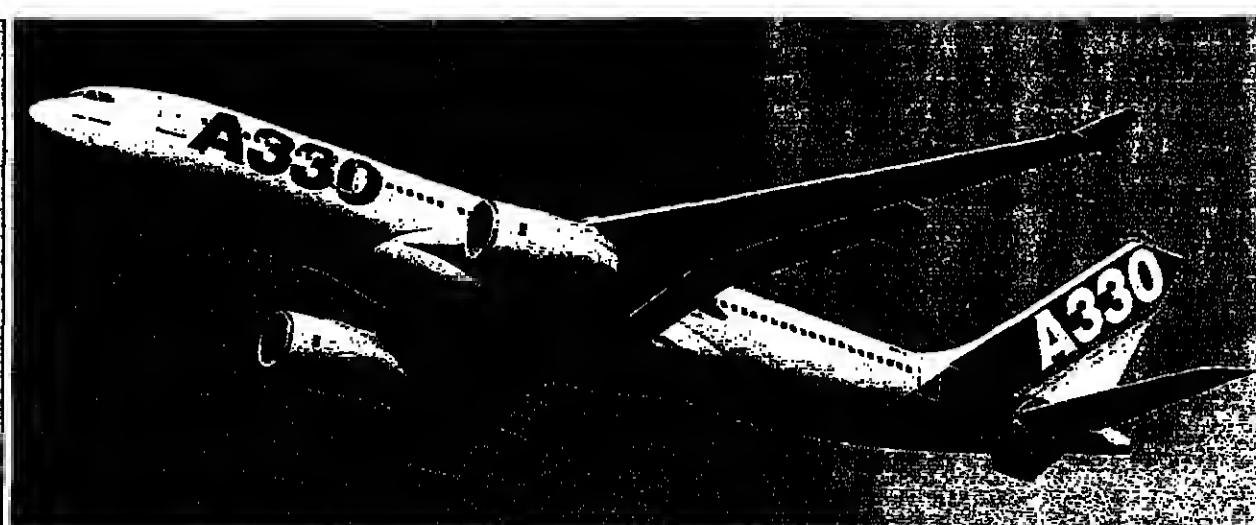
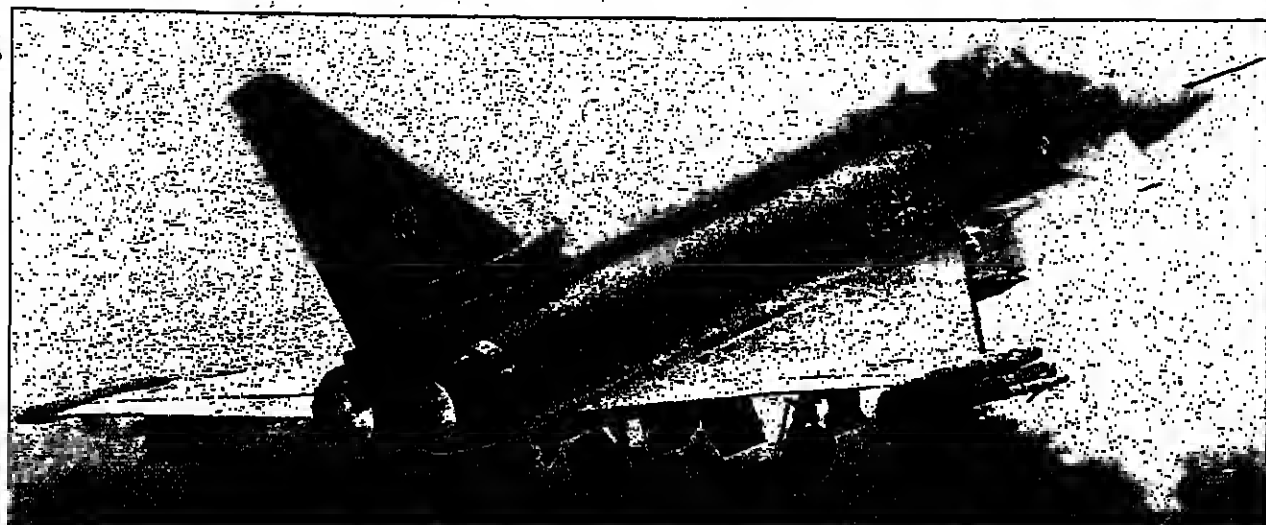
The culmination of years of Conservative tax increases, tough control on public spending by Gordon Brown (and, of course, growth after sterling was allowed to float) has been that the budget deficit has been cut from some £50 billion

at the peak to a likely surplus this year and balance in 1999-2000.

So here are some reasons to be cheerful about the year ahead. Without a boom (in growth or credit), there need not be a bust. With the public finances headed for balance, with inflation low and with sterling floating freely, rates can be cut by as much as is needed. Consumer spending, which is so important a component of British GDP, would have to implode to cause a recession and that is not happening. As Tim Congdon of Lombard Street Research put it recently: "The jeremiahs need to remember that sales of mobile phones and foreign holidays are booming and that sales data from Marks & Spencer and John Lewis are not the whole story."

On Friday we will see the first snapshot of fourth-quarter GDP with the City forecasting growth of 0.1 per cent. Given small signs of a recovery in business and consumer confidence, there may be no time to squeeze in even a technical recession before the rebound everyone expects in the second half.

Europe cries foul as New BAe emerges



The Eurofighter 2000, produced jointly by BAe and Dasa of Germany, Casa of Spain and Italy's Finmeccanica and the Airbus A330, which BAe developed with Aérospatiale of France, Dasa and Casa, are examples of how European co-operation can work

It is easy to feel sorry for France. Badgered by Britain and Germany, the French Government has swallowed its pride and started the long process of privatising Aérospatiale, the aircraft company that dreamt up Concorde, to make the business a more acceptable partner in pan-European mergers.

Fully aware of the strikes that can follow attempts to overhaul state industries in France, it also privately signalled that it would cut its stake in Thomson-CSF, the defence electronics group, to as little as 5 per cent.

And then what happens? For all their rhetoric about cross-border deals, the two big UK defence companies, British Aerospace and GEC's Marconi Electronic Systems, produce an "Anglo-British" solution: an £8 billion merger that would have been condemned as a backward step had it happened in France.

The French are not alone in being concerned about the perceived insularity of the deal. When Lord Simpson of Dunkeld, the chief executive of GEC, and Sir Richard Evans, the chairman of British Aerospace, saw Tony Blair on Monday, the Prime Minister is understood to have reiterated the Government's desire for a link with continental Europe.

Then there are the Germans. The most logical continental partner for British Aerospace has always been Dasa, the aerospace arm of DaimlerChrysler. Talks have been stopping and starting since 1995 and the two sides came close to an agreement before Christmas.

Yesterday, GEC was at pains to say that it did not gate-crash these talks. Indeed, GEC, BAe and Dasa sat round

Adam Jones reports on the reaction to the 'Anglo-British' deal

the negotiating table on at least one occasion and examined the case for a three-way merger.

BAe had trouble overcoming the German fear of Dasa being swamped by a much larger British company. New British Aerospace — the expanded company that will be

formed if the Marconi merger goes through — still wants to link with Dasa, even though the size mismatch will be much worse after the merger.

Yesterday, an angry Dasa gave warning that the BAe-Marconi deal "will make balanced European horizontal

mergers such as Dasa-BAe impossible and create an obstacle to European integration".

Sir Richard Evans, who will continue to head New BAe, realises that he will have to smooth many ruffled feathers. He admits that the merger will make BAe seem even

more threatening to Dasa: "Our job is to overcome these obstacles."

Dasa may get the hump and look to merge with Thomson-CSF, which has emerged from the Marconi bid talks looking rather bruised.

GEC used Thomson to ex-

tract a full price from BAe. It worked. BAe will have to face accusations that it overpaid for Marconi.

Thomson negotiators fought until the last minute, coming back to London and raising their offer for the GEC arm on Monday, but Lord Simpson batted this away before heading to the City offices of Warburg Dillon Read to close the deal with BAe.

As long as the French State keeps a stake in Thomson, it will find mergers difficult. Will the state let factories close in the South of France to realise cost savings? DaimlerChrysler may prefer to merge Dasa with another rather than the French resolve. It could draw on Chrysler's American contacts to smooth a path towards a US link.

It may be the case that New BAe will strike smaller deals, similar to its tie-up with Saab of Sweden, while the French and Germans lick their wounds.

It is in talks with both Casa

of Spain and Finmeccanica of Italy. Casa is a partner on the Airbus project. This could complicate things even further with Aérospatiale and Dasa, the other Airbus companies.

Finmeccanica, another relative minnow in the defence industry pond, may be a more likely BAe target. By buying Marconi Electronic Systems, BAe will gain Finmeccanica's Alenia Difesa arm as a joint venture partner. Marconi signed a deal with last year to combine land and naval radar businesses, giving an annual turnover of £1 billion. BAe has been in separate talks with the Italians about greater co-operation on military aircraft projects.

Ultimately, John Weston, the chief executive of BAe, is adamant that European consolidation will end with a transatlantic merger. However, he says such a link is several years away. The US Department of Defense has given no clear guidance to its defence

companies about the desirability of involving foreign firms in US arms manufacture. After the debacle of Lockheed Martin's aborted merger with Northrop Grumman, the US industry is being very careful.

So there is no short-term escape from the need to get along with European neighbours. BAe realises this. All of the forelock-tugging skills it developed buttering up wealthy Arab nations will now have to be deployed in Europe.

Of course, on a purely tribal level, the naughtiness of a BAe-Marconi merger provokes an undercurrent of glee in Britain, especially among those fatalists who believed the French would fight dirty and end up running the show.

In that sense, the deal is like a member of the England football team scoring with an obvious handball in a World Cup quarter-final against Argentina. New British Aerospace will now have to defend its lead, while making sure the other players don't walk off the pitch in disgust.

On-off relationship ends in marriage of convenience

Politics and personalities stopped Britain from creating a world-scale defence and aerospace combine more than 20 years, enabling France and Germany to catch up. In the 1970s, Arnold Weinstock's GEC owned half of the British Aircraft Corporation as well as Marconi, the nucleus of the new group. But Tony Benn nationalised BAC to form part of British Aerospace in 1976, the last big state takeover in Britain.

For the next two decades, Lord Weinstock manoeuvred to regain what he regarded as his property, even though he never liked the civil aircraft side. Having seen BAC sequestered for far less than market value, however, he was fatally reluctant to pay much to get it back.

A chance came to buy the whole of British Aerospace in 1984, when it was semi-privatised. Sir Peter Lister, leading rival Thorn-EMI into a risky buying spree, opened bid talks with BAe, then headed by the mild-mannered but worldly Sir Austin Pearce.

GEC had rival talks but neither made a bid. Lord Weinstock was on poor terms with the Thatcher Government, including Norman Tebbit, Trade Secretary, who saw him as the epitome of whinging corporatism. GEC thought it would not be allowed



Weinstock: missed opportunity

to become so powerful a supplier to the Ministry of Defence. Relations between the companies grew worse under the next BAE regime, which teamed Sir Roland Smith, the chief marketing expert, with Admiral Sir Raymond Lygo, the chief executive. Sir Roland had little respect for the management style of the ageing Weinstock. Egos collided. GEC was seen as an aggressive predator. Sir Roland set about turning BAe into a giant in its own right, buying Rover among much else to con-

struct a British equivalent of Daimler-Benz or Fiat. But lack of long-term finance led to a cash crisis when the slump of 1991-92 brought his losses on civil aircraft.

Again, GEC had a chance to pounce. In September 1992, a rights issue was floundering. Sir Roland Smith had gone, BAe's board was in disarray and its market had shrunk to £440 million. But Weinstock lost his prize by refusing to risk GEC's funds on such an ailing outfit. New men at BAe were not inclined to sell it for a pittance. The moment was soon gone, one of the great lost opportunities of corporate history.

Sir Dick Evans, who did so much to transform BAe into a £9.5 billion company in six years, got on better with GEC but understandably did not want to be junior partner. Issues of executive pecking order are thought to have dogged on-off talks over a defence merger since 1995. It was not made easier when GEC came under the leadership of Lord Simpson of Dunkeld, who had run Rover for BAe when Sir Dick was chief executive but left to be top dog at Lucas. Only a government volte face under Tony Blair and the threat of being picked off separately seem finally to have brought them together.

GRAHAM SEARJEANT

No Mayo

ONE man not asked his opinion of the GEC decision to merge its Marconi business with British Aerospace was Lord Weinstock, still in occupancy at GEC's shrunken headquarters and chairman emeritus.

Lord Simpson of Dunkeld, his replacement as chief executive, said Weinstock's post these days was not a hands-on one and the man who largely created GEC was not party to the discussions. "I'm sure he

may be trying to contact me as we speak," said Simpson cheekily.

My man at yesterday's briefing was startled to see that Weinstock's notoriously parsimonious streak lingers on, though. John Mayo, the sometimes combative finance director of GEC, was spotted carefully inspecting the complimentary pastries beforehand.

Then the very lookalike is in charge of the catering at Warburg Dillon Read.



"I'm collecting money to support The Body Shop"

A MEDIA-WATCHER was asked, in the light of the rash of reports predicting his downfall, to give a rating to David Montgomery, Mirror Group's chief executive. "About 60 per cent," came the reply. "He's very good at cost-cutting." And what about future strategy? "That's the 40 per cent."

Light sleep

MICHAEL FOOT, head of banking supervision at the Financial Services Authority, was telling of how he was



forced to sleep at work over the new year because of the euro. One problem: the FSA, like many modern offices, has one of those automatic lighting systems that work in the presence of a warm body. Asleep or not, so he had to kip down in the boardroom, the only place you can switch the light off. He will be there next New Year's Eve, too, he expects. The only advantage this time is the magnificent view of the FSA's Canary Wharf offices have of the Millennium Dome.

Offline

IT WAS kind of Barclays Corporate Banking to invite

a colleague for a ride around London in a stretch limo drinking champagne while testing "the world's first ever remote access business electronic banking product which can be accessed from a fully-mobile sub-notebook computer" (read: direct banking from a laptop).

Alas, it became apparent, as the limo moved off, that the device didn't work. Barclays suggested they parked and tried; my colleague said no, it was supposed to be mobile.

They drove on. At last the device cracked into life, only to cut out again a few yards later. And so it went on. Still, the champagne was OK.

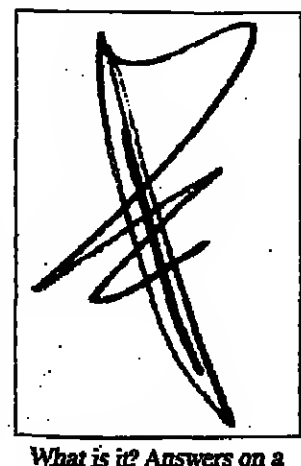
GLANBIA sounds like somewhere you go for a cheap holiday, but it is the latest daft corporate name dreamt up by the image consultants. It replaces the perfectly respectable Avonmore Waterford Group and joins a hall of infamy that includes Diageo, Hyder, the old Welsh Water, and Chorion.

Sign off

LOOK at the picture below. Is it a) Glanbia's new corporate logo; b) the amoeba that causes glanbia, a West African fever; or c) your doctor's signature on a prescription to treat it? It is the signature of David Abdo, company secretary of Carlton, in the latest accounts. Chairman Michael Green's is little better. The only one to master joined-up writing is June de Moller, managing director. And she's retiring.

MARTIN WALLER

city diary@the-times.co.uk



What is it? Answers on a postcard to Carlton

THE SUNDAY TIMES

PRESENTS

Valentine's Day

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

tommy AND tommy girl

The Sunday Times offers you the opportunity to place a Valentine's message in the paper on Sunday February 14th 1999. In addition we will send a 50ml bottle of tommygirl (RRP £25) or tommy (RRP £22) together with a note which reads "Look for your message in the Sunday Times on Valentine's Day". The cost is from £35 for a minimum 3 line message and a 50ml fragrance. Please indicate whether the male or female fragrance is required by ticking the relevant box below.

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THE TIMES INTERNATIONAL

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Late sell-off for equities

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1998 Low Company Price \$1.00 1998 Low Company Price \$1.00 1998 Low Company Price \$1.00

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

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Edward Fennell presents a two-page special report on the Government's annual celebration of the best training in industry

Winners reap the reward of a top workforce

A recent victim of a botched programme complained earlier this month: "Training means spending three hours in a training room, falling asleep while being lectured at by someone about computers. Frankly, I'm very sceptical about the value of that."

And quite right, too. Training without targets or benefits is useless. The Government's annual National Training Awards, launched this week, aims to be an antidote to this kind of wasteful training.

With the backing of key organisations such as the CBI, the TUC and the Institute of Personnel and Development—all of whom are represented on the judging panel—National Training Awards give formal recognition each autumn to a hundred or so organisations and a score of individuals who have engaged in "exceptionally effective training".

The award winners provide models of good practice of what can be achieved when training is well managed as a business development. This can often lead to less money being spent on training—but being spent more thoughtfully and effectively.

Training is no longer the Cinderella it once was. The massive increase in the use of information technology and the current culture of customer service and quality systems has compelled employers to invest in the skills of their workforce. It was noticeable that during the last recession (for the first time) training was not slashed by the accountants as an unnecessary item in the balance sheet.

Even so, there are strong signs that while the spirit is willing, the delivery is often weak. Employers recognise the importance of training to their organisations but are

still prone to lazy planning and poor preparation. Facile short cuts—notably the off-the-shelf, generic course—still provide many employers with the bulk of their training diet. The result is bland or irrelevant courses, inadequate monitoring of achievement and little, if any, follow-up. Sure, the staff have undergone training. But what have they learnt? Has their performance materially improved? All too often nobody knows, or cares.

So, despite being in their second decade, National Training Awards still have an important mission to accomplish. In their early years the awards helped to put training on the business agenda and many of Britain's best-known companies such as Rolls-Royce, British Steel and Lucas Industries have regularly appeared among the ranks of the winners. Now more than ever, their message is that training must be delivered in a planned and professional way to realise specific benefits, whether for organisations or for individuals.

One of the main ways of communicating this message is through the nationwide series of workshops and presentations organised by training and enterprise councils (Tecs) and local enterprise councils in Scotland. These workshops have become useful training exercises in their own right as they convey the underlying principles of effective training.

Cliff Ellison, the chief executive of Rochdale Tec, is a great fan of the awards. He chairs a panel that brings together 14 organisations in the North West to promote the National Training Awards and to groom entrants for success.

"Many companies are interested in the awards, attend one of our workshops and then recognise that their own

training strategies won't make the grade," he says. "This gives us an opportunity to work with these organisations, to improve their training management and then, in due course, perhaps apply for an award."

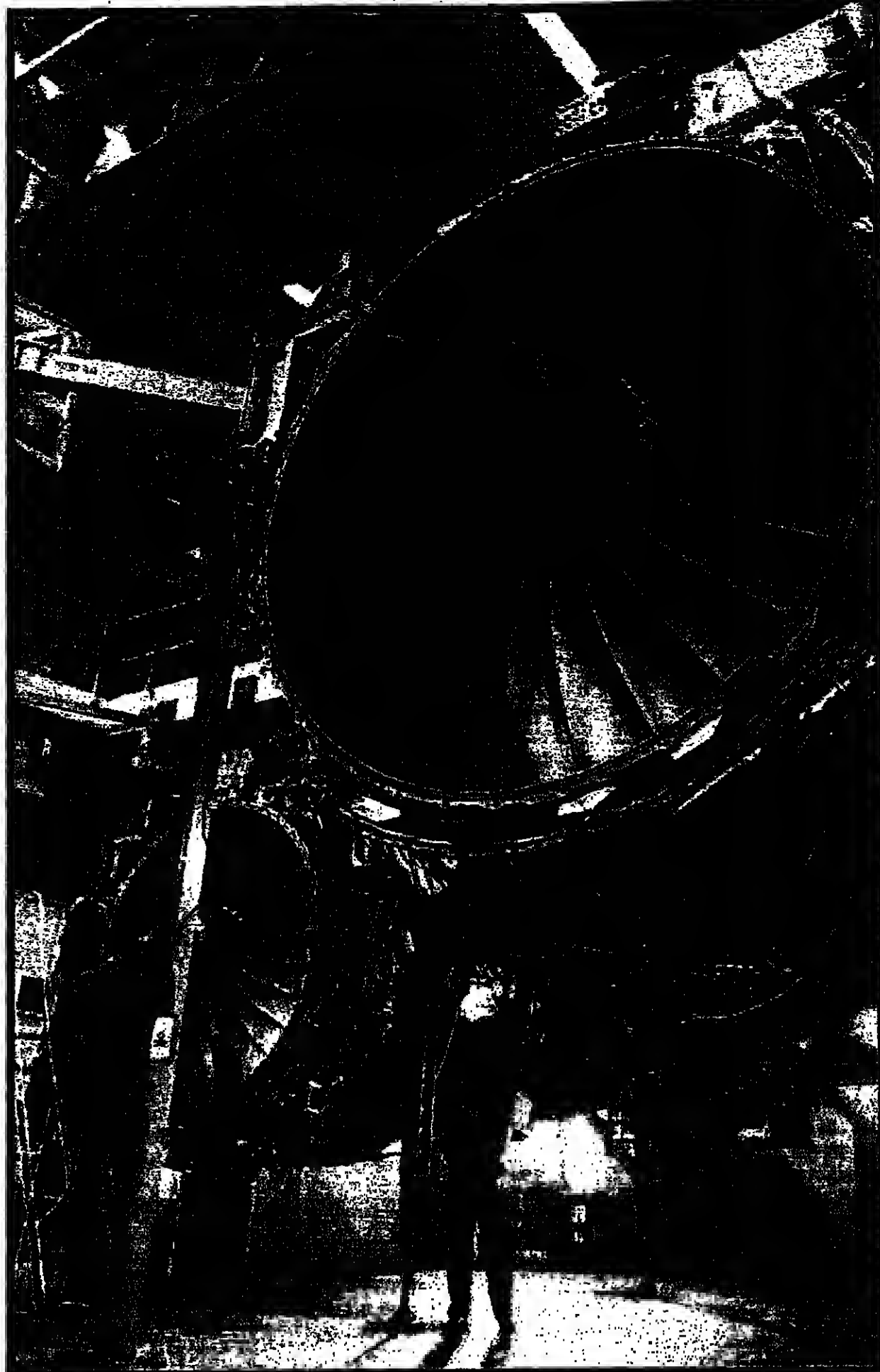
Judges not only evaluate the training but also scrutinise the results in terms of business and individual performance. This may mean that it takes a year or two before concrete results come through.

Individuals are not left out of the Training Awards agenda. With a focus on those who have used training to restart their careers or overcome disabilities, the winners' stories send out the message that responsibility for training and personal development lies with individuals just as much as with their employers.

In a world of uncertain futures where nobody is owed a job for life, individual workers must be more proactive in increasing their skills and knowledge. Individual National Training Award winners tend to be exemplars of those who have "pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps" but the general message applies to us all.

But beware of the quagmire of pointless, useless training. National Training Award Winners provide a beacon of how it should be done.

● National Training Award Workshops are being held across the North West from January through to March. For more information contact the NTA North West hotline on 01606 734355. For more information about the Awards generally contact the National Training Awards Office on 01142 593419. Entries for the 1999 awards should be received by May 14.



Rolls-Royce is among many of Britain's better known companies to appear regularly among the ranks of winners

Slump spurred lawyer to act

NINE years ago, Brian Marson's law firm was facing ruin. He had set up Marsons in Kent in 1986 and had quickly become dependent on conveyancing—but when recession destroyed the property market, Mr Marson was deeply in debt.

"Standing still was not an option," he says. "We either went up or we went out of business. I was determined to survive."

That kind of desperation drove him to invest in training. "Though I was an experienced solicitor, I knew nothing about management," he recalls. "A one-week course taught me how to write a business plan. Since then, it has been a story of continuous progress."

Now Marsons is thriving. Over the past three years, financial turnover has increased sixfold and staff by four times. Mr Marson attributes his success equally to his investment in training and information technology.

Along the way, Brian Marson has sought external recognition of the firm's achievements. First, he achieved the quality standard ISO9000. Next, he became an Investor in People, and in 1996 he won a National Training Award.

He says: "Every time we go for an award, we learn something about ourselves. And we use the information to improve the firm."

This year Marsons will be entering again for an award. Mr Marson believes that the contribution made by training to the progress of the business warrants it. The link between IT and training is now particularly important.

With the right technology and skilled people, Marsons has automated many legal processes and the firm has now picked up slices of work from banks and housing associations of a magnitude that would have been beyond him in the early 1980s.

He adds: "There are some high-street firms that are trying to continue using typewriters—I don't see how they can survive. To succeed today, you have got to be prepared to make the investment in your staff and in technology."



High performance business and management training has helped Scania to realise its ambitions

Pole position in the trucks race

Graham Cramp of Scania (Great Britain) is not much given to sentiment or tripe. He has looked at a number of external awards and badges and dismissed them as irrelevant.

But he is a great fan of National Training Awards. As Scania's franchise and staff development manager, he must persuade franchisees to attend courses that help to build their business.

These franchisees are a sceptical lot—but they do respond to genuine quality.

That's why Mr Cramp was keen to gain a National Training Award as an endorsement of what he is providing.

"Our franchisees must pay to attend our courses so they need to be confident that they will get value for money. Having a National Training Award helps to demonstrate that," he says.

Scania has won National Training Awards twice in the past four years and its approach is firmly grounded in the business needs of the organisation. "Some years ago we were given the task of increas-

Scania tailored its staff development scheme to win a second award

ing our penetration of the trucks market from 9 per cent to 20 per cent," Mr Cramp says.

"To do that we had to increase the number of our workshops and provide excellent aftercare service. That meant training a lot of people in technical skills. But we also decided, for the first time, to offer training in business and management skills."

It is the business and management training that has helped Scania to realise its ambitions in Britain, and Mr Cramp was delighted when the programme received the ultimate stamp of approval from the National Training Awards judges.

"It was good for me and my staff. It was also good for the people coming on the course—

it gave them confidence in what they would experience. And, finally, it was good for our customers because they could feel reassured about the quality of service they would receive."

Like many National Training Award winners Mr Cramp is critical of much of the training that is available on the market.

"I don't believe in quick fixes," he says. "For training to be effective it needs to be undertaken over a period of time and should ideally include a measurement of what people can do before the start of the course so that progress can be measured. You also need to evaluate its long-term impact."

Scania's business strategy based on training has paid off. The company reached pole position in the trucks business three years ahead of schedule. And it is still committed to the value of National Training Awards.

"The next time we have a training programme that is exceptionally effective then we shall definitely enter it," says Mr Cramp.

Investing in drivers as well as diggers makes sense at Shepherd Construction

Smart builders pass the site test

THE construction industry is bedevilled by cowboy builders, but Shepherd Construction has no such reputation—quite the reverse. Based in Yorkshire but operating nationally, Shepherd has a string of eminent clients (including, for example, Marks & Spencer) who return to the company on a regular basis.

One of Shepherd's greatest strengths is that it has a permanently employed workforce of more than 1,000. It also has a commitment to training and retaining its staff on a long-term basis.

John Foreman, the personnel director, points out that the family-owned company has a training record stretching right back to the early Sixties, when its founder, Sir Peter Shepherd, established its corporate values. That training tradition continues today under the present chairman, Paul Shepherd.

Shepherd Construction is engaged on a wide spectrum of training, ranging from Modern Apprenticeships to advanced technical and management training linked to post-graduate qualifications.

"Training is focused on our operating needs," Mr Foreman says. "It is driven by hard business objectives and we are always concerned that any training programme we are involved in, at whatever level, should produce results on the bottom line."

This practical attitude has won

Shepherd two National Training Awards in recent years. "We see National Training Awards as a way of measuring ourselves against the best in the country," Mr Foreman says.

"When we win an award it is good for our pride, and also a way of showing our customers that we are concerned about the skill levels of our staff. Discriminating clients recognise the importance of that."

Mr Foreman is a keen supporter of the work done nationally by the Construction Industry Training Board to

ensure that the industry's skill needs are met. But he is worried that training is not taken seriously enough in some companies.

"Many managers take far more time and care in selecting a new JCB than in ensuring that a driver is properly trained to operate it," he says. "Yet without the right training, the equipment will not repay the investment. It is important that employers should get the right balance in their priorities and appreciate how important training is—provided it is done properly."

Mr Foreman also feels that it is too easy for managers to select off-the-shelf courses without questioning whether they will be genuinely relevant in the workplace.

"National Training Awards really test the effectiveness of training," Mr Foreman says. "That is why we think they are worthwhile."



Training award winner: a Bombardier maintenance team

Skilled personnel take off in Ulster

A global aerospace manufacturer has stayed ahead by constantly upgrading staff training

Despite the Troubles, Northern Ireland has had at least one long-running success story, with the aircraft-maker Shorts, now part of Bombardier Aerospace, the Canadian-based multinational.

During the past decade the company has won eight National Training Awards, an extraordinary achievement. The success rate, however, reflects the company's commitment to training. As the world's third largest civil aircraft manufacturer (making, for example, the Learjet, the Challenger and the Global Express), Bombardier has introduced a new aircraft every year for the past six years.

This level of innovation demands that the company cannot stand still. It needs to develop its skill base constantly, both technically and managerially.

David Molloy is the French-Canadian acting vice-president for human resources for Shorts in Belfast. "The skills of the Northern Ireland workforce are well-respected throughout the company," he says. "Laurent Beaudoin, the president of Bombardier, was commenting on them in Canada recently. And the company has a strong commitment to continue developing those skills. During the past ten years we have spent £70 million on training alone in Belfast."

But where do National Training Awards fit in? "I think that external evaluation and recogni-

tion of what one is doing is very important. It is satisfying to receive a government award of this kind," says Mr Molloy.

Although Bombardier has a strong respect for the cultural and social differences within its organisation (it operates in 11 countries across North America and Europe), it uses a common, company-wide performance management system in which skills, career development and succession planning are closely interwoven.

Based on regular personal appraisals, the planning of training is linked directly to the overall needs of the business and the career progress of each individual.

Everything, ultimately, is geared to financial results. The various National Training Award winning entries have all stemmed from this process.

Its entry for last year was typical of its approach. Featuring a training programme for employees who worked on aerospace machinery maintenance, Shorts was able to show that dependence on suppliers had been sharply reduced. This led to savings of about £3 million and a 20 per cent improvement in engineering maintenance productivity.

With results like that it is not surprising that Bombardier has no hesitation in continuing to back its training commitment in Northern Ireland—and to support the National Training Awards.

سكيا من الامم

More initiatives bubble in the forge

The minister in charge of boosting Britain's skills base has high hopes, says Edward Fennell

As the recently appointed Minister for Lifelong Learning, George Mudie has a down-to-earth approach to the job of steering the UK's investment in job training.

Representing a Leeds constituency that has seen a massive reduction of the local clothing industry, he knows how important it is for people to develop new skills and for communities to plan ahead to attract fresh investment and jobs.

With the task of spearheading initiatives such as the University for Industry and the new Individual Learning Accounts, Mr Mudie is confident that 1999 will be the year that training for jobs starts to attract its share of the limelight at the Department for Education and Employment.

As its annual recognition of excellence in training takes place, the National Training Awards continue to play an important part in the department's initiatives to encourage greater take-up of effective training.

Mr Mudie's particular concern is that employers should adopt a liberal approach, so that programmes are not too narrowly focused but, rather, help to develop employees' capabilities.

As its annual recognition of excellence in training the NTA continues to play an important part in the DfEE's suite of initiatives to encourage the greater take-up of effective training. In recent years, however, the number of applications for NTAs has dropped.

For example, since 1996 there has been a fall of 33 per cent. Official views are mixed on this.

The numbers of entrants may have declined, but the quality is higher and the workshops run by Tecs has led to much greater self-selection among potential applicants.

A big test for the department will be the take-up this year of Individual Learning Accounts. The Government will be making £150 a head available to 100,000 people from April. In return, those people must make a personal investment of



Mudie concerned

£25. The aim is to have a million people with learning accounts by 2002.

If the system is to work, it is vital that the money is wisely spent. Mr Mudie is keen to maximise the benefits by encouraging workers to act collectively — through their trade unions, typically — so as to gain economies of scale in buying in relevant training.

He is convinced that the na-

Labour's election campaign and the time has come to start delivering. A budget of £40 million has been allocated for the university, and an advisory board has been put in place a three-year development plan.

Based in Sheffield, the university will aim to exploit the potential of information technology in general, and the Internet in particular, to produce a wide range of learning materials that people can easily gain access to at work or at home.

Money has been won from the European Union's Adapt scheme to fund the development projects, and the university should start to make its presence felt during the next two years.

Yet while pushing forward on these new fronts, Mr Mudie is still concerned to embed some developments from the previous administration. The increased take-up of National Vocational Qualifications, the new-style job qualifications launched a decade ago, is of continuing concern to him.

'She was so proud of her certificate that she put it up above where she worked.'

tional mood is right for this kind of initiative. The empowerment of individuals through training is his personal motto in driving forward the programme. Aware that the UK still has one of the highest proportions of unqualified people among the Western industrialised nations, he believes that this "second chance" education is now critical for the future of both individuals and industry.

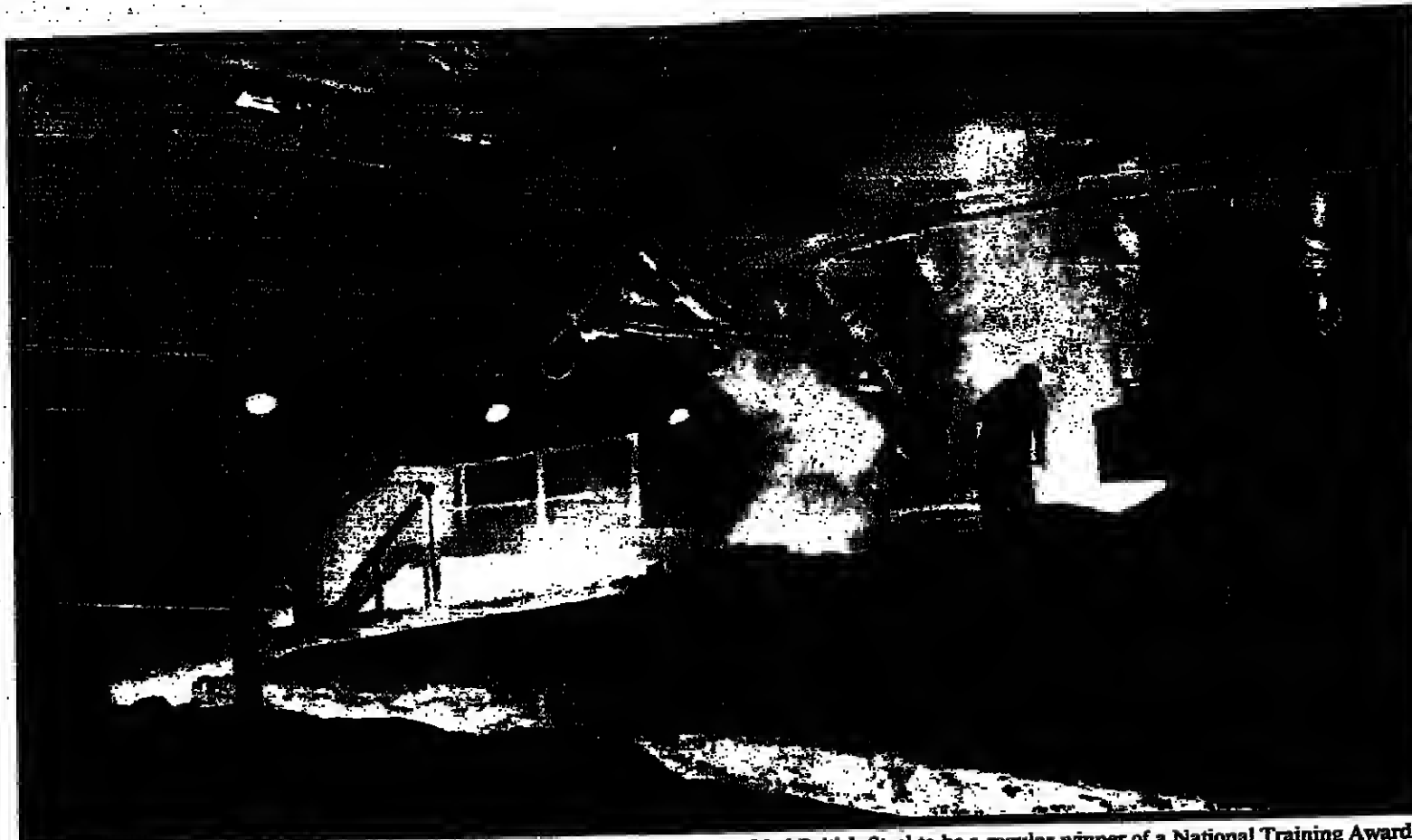
Parallel to Individual Learning Accounts is the opening of the 'University for Industry'. Much was made of this during

Sceptical at first of the value of NVQs, he is now a supporter. "I was visiting a factory in Leeds and I met a young woman who had recently gained an NVQ. She was so proud of her achievement that she had framed the certificate and put it up above where she worked. It clearly meant a lot to her."

To achieve his ambitions for all these initiatives, Mr Mudie is keen to work with both the locally based Tecs and Less and the recently established National Training Organisations.

"These are people who must work directly with employers to ensure that training continues to be a high priority," he says.

The significance of National Training Awards is that they provide real-life examples of what training can achieve. "I am fully behind NTAs," Mr Mudie says. "We must work to ensure that participation continues to grow."



An excellent training schedule, such as here at the Scunthorpe works, has enabled British Steel to be a regular winner of a National Training Award

Fighting spirit the perfect weapon

An ex-soldier is promoted from manual labour to management



Mercer: combined rubbish with finance

During the four years he was in the Army, Steve Mercer acquired the skills and personal attributes of the professional soldier. When he got back to civvy street (straight from a tour of duty in Northern Ireland) he found the personal attributes stood him in good stead, even if he could not transfer the military skills. "At first I was unemployed," he explains. "It was frustrating. I felt I had the potential to develop a good career, but it was a question of finding the right opportunity."

Mr Mercer's story has been one of rags-to-acclaim (if not riches) as a National Training Awards individual winner. He got his first permanent civilian job ten years ago, collecting Christmas rubbish as part of the Rochdale Bor-

ough Council's direct services organisation.

"When I was interviewed for the job I told the manager that I wanted first to learn to drive the truck, then to be in charge of it and then to be promoted to management," he says. "He was amazed at my attitude, and then gave me a lot of support later on."

Through plenty of hard work, training and learning in his own time — plus the support of a sympathetic employer — Mr Mercer achieved his ambitions, and more. "After working all day I used to go to college to study finance, where I was alongside people who had been sitting comfort-

ably in their offices with their Filofaxes while I was out collecting rubbish," he recalls.

Mr Mercer's resilience, a legacy from the Forces, paid off. He gained a supervisor's qualification, a Higher National Certificate in Business and Finance and various other qualifications, including a Diploma in Occupational Safety.

Meanwhile, he was being promoted at work and is now the manager responsible for health, safety and quality assurance of 1,800 staff.

His career advancement and learning success earned him a Supreme Winners Award in the National Train-

ing Awards in 1997 and the chance to meet government ministers and officials at the House of Commons.

"I firmly believe in the importance of creating opportunities for people to develop themselves," he says. "Employers should never underestimate the capabilities of their staff."

Mr Mercer's participation in the National Training Awards allowed him the opportunity to gain recognition for his achievements while highlighting just how much individuals can progress if presented with basic opportunities for self-development. And it's certainly not the end for him — he's keen to take his career to an even higher level. "I am not resting on my laurels," he says. "I want further opportunities."

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THE NATIONAL TRAINING AWARDS

LISTINGS

Schoolgirls' new opera

RECOMMENDED TODAY

Guide to arts and entertainment compiled by Mark Hargie

LONDON

MEASURE FOR MEASURE Stephen Boyd is superb as Angelo, and Clara Holman is superb as Isabella, in Michael Boyd's RSC production of Shakespeare's most underrated play. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 7pm, in repertory. (S)

STONE ANGELS Paul Barker's new opera features a cast of 30 schoolgirls from the acclaimed New London Children's Choir and tells the story of a group of girls stranded on a Greek island at the outbreak of the Second World War. For this premiere Odette de la Martinez conducts her ensemble Lontano. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight and tomorrow, 8pm. (S)

THE DECEIVED The Italian source for Shakespeare's Twelfth Night but much more of a cross-dressing sexual romp. Kenneth Branagh's production for the Theatre Royal is a riot. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

POOLS In a constant bombing a double dose of distinguished Russian musical artists Dmitri Kizenko

conducted the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in a programme of Russian and Soviet music, with Boris Berezovsky as soloist in Beethoven's lyrical Third Piano Concerto. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

YORK The vibrant young ensemble Capricorn performs an engaging programme of chamber music opening with Beethoven's Piano and Violin. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

POOLS In a constant bombing a double dose of distinguished Russian musical artists Dmitri Kizenko

NEW WEST END SHOWS

Jeremy Kingston's choice of theatre showing in London

RICHARD III Robert Lindsay puts on the rump for David Hare's play. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

THE COLOUR OF JUSTICE Dramatised reconstruction of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

IN FLAMES The tangled worlds of a modern woman and an Edwardian man. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

THE GLORY OF LIVING Based on the life of Albert Einstein. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

KRAPP'S LAST TAPE Edward Pinter's play about a man who has lost his memory. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

FILMS ON GENERAL RELEASE

James Christopher's choice of the latest movies

NEW RELEASES

MEET JOE BLACK (12): Brad Pitt's career, charming Joe Black, aka Death, helps Anthony Hopkins's media tycoon to introduce him to the joys of life. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

THE OPPOSITE OF SEX (15): Christine Ricci plays a lonely 16-year-old who seduces her boyfriend by seducing his boyfriend. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

BUTTONED UP (12): Ingenious low-budget Czech film by Petr Zelenka that straddles the divide between modernism and a dusty chain of quality sometimes fails. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

DOBERMANN (15): Stylish French thriller about a man who is a genius at chess and a genius at murder. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

SOUR GRAPES (15): Storm dressed up as a film by Larry David. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

LITTLE VOICE (15): Mark Herman's wonderful version of Jim Carver's story of a young girl who is a genius at chess. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

THE SIEGE (15): Dorel Wessington, a young girl who is a genius at chess. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

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ARTS

Grating white hope

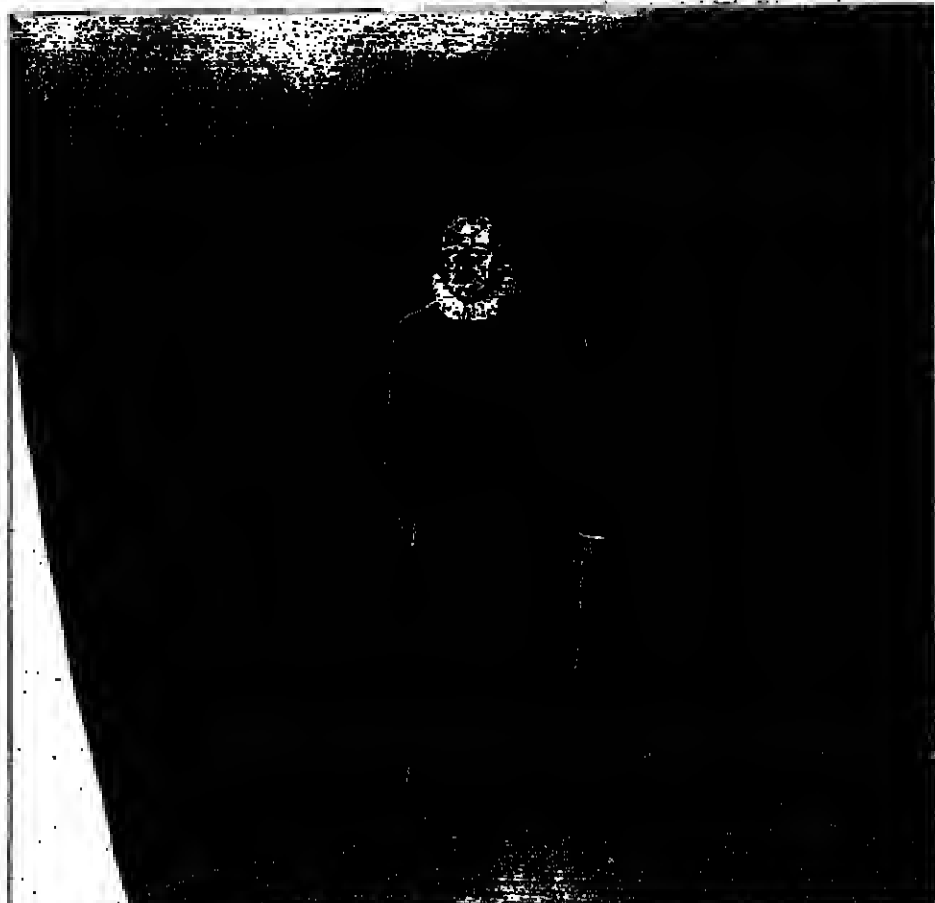
Whether loved or loathed, Julian Schnabel now demands our respect, says Rachel Campbell-Johnston

Julian Schnabel comes with a pre-packaged reputation. The centre-spread of the 1980s New York art world, he was famed as the biggest, brashest, most bombastic artist in America: an habitué of its glitziest parties, a feature of its glossiest magazines. His personality was as publicised as his painting, and to many the soaring career of this Bronx boy made millionaires came to represent all that was achievable through sheer force of self-belief. Schnabel became a symbol of the American Dream.

But the British were reluctant to buy into this transatlantic commodity. When Schnabel last showed here, more than ten years ago, the hackles of the critics were raised. He was the product of a preposterously overinflated American art market, they said. Branded as a consummate marketing man, Schnabel was attacked as an arrogant, opinionated egomaniac; a brash American brat whose work had all the weight of a publicity stunt.

Such vitriol makes one wonder. In the art market Schnabel is a heavyweight. His pieces have been acquired by many of the major galleries, by the Pompidou, the Whitney and the Tate. They have changed hands for more than \$1 million. Suddenly, the critics' animosity begins to seem suspiciously similar to the pique of some likely lad out on the town who, meeting a prize fighter in some basement bar, picks a fight and takes a pop at him, just to prove that he's not impressed. Surely any artist who can shake up such extreme reactions, such an inflammatory cocktail of aggression and praise, is worth a closer look?

The abandoned energy of the works in Schnabel's new show at the South London Gallery is striking: epic arenas flailed with paint, three canvases looming against the stark white walls. They were painted for an Ancient Roman gallery, the Maison Carré at Nîmes. And the context was to provide the inspiration. "I was thinking about gladiatorial contests," Schnabel says, "and about the bullfight at Nîmes. When a bull dies it draws in blood across the sand." In his



Julian Schnabel's Portrait of José Ramón Artero, with characteristic splash of white paint

painting AD, the red paint smears wounds across the rough, raw cloth.

Working on these paintings in his roofless Long Island studio, hurling a pigment-drenched tablecloth at the surfaces, Schnabel spread himself against billowing canvases wrenched from their stretchers by sudden winds. "I felt like Captain Ahab, beckoning from the dead," he says. And suddenly it's easy to imagine this thickest man, with up-thrust beard and fist aloft, roaring at the tempest and the great white canvas. Suddenly you can imagine the sneaking wind and blazoned light, and find their traces in his work. As images and associations stream unstructured from his mind, Schnabel reveals his greatest talent: to reel listeners into his enthusiasms. "Painting is like whaling," he explains. "Casting out into the ocean, seeing what you can get. I think of these works as the banners or flags of some vast eternity, of heaven."

But the huge canvases of his triptych are quite different from the mock period portraits which Schnabel displays alongside them in his current show. Full-length Velázquez-style figures gleam sickly behind a lurid glaze. There is a stylistic disparity which breeds doubt. Where dedication to a single passion is often taken as proof of authenticity, Schnabel is threateningly omnivorous. Superficial, many have said. Since he first gained public notice with por-

traits painted on a surface of china shards — instant Cubism on a cup — he has moved restlessly from Abstraction to Expressionism to Conceptualism and back again. He has recorded a rock album. He has made a film about the graffiti



In his London show, Schnabel reveals his greatest talent: to reel listeners into his enthusiasms?

artist Jean-Michel Basquiat's life. He is currently working on another movie, about the Cuban writer, Reinaldo Arenas. He devours all media with gluttonous voracity, seemingly mindless of the need for native talent or slow-earned skill.

While the broad theme of time informs all the works in this show, Schnabel is dismissive of formulaic practices. The white enamel splashed across the surface of his portraits represents a veil of temporality. And yet it is absent from one of the pictures. "I don't think I need the same tools, or the same kind of solutions, for each painting," he explains.

Schnabel simply allows his own energy and enthusiasm, his own violently tossing and turning ideas, to create the binding force for his art. There is a sense that they are valid simply because it was he who made them. And in this sense Schnabel becomes a role model for the Brit-pack artists who arrogate if ironic self-belief has become characteristic. Of course the more traditional art appreciator will complain that Schnabel has little ability; that, put quite simply, he can't actually paint. Art colleges all over Britain are turning out students who can represent the nude, who can compose and model and draw better than Schnabel has ever done. But if art is about an individual's expression, about contemporary cultural comment and the innovative interpretation of the mood of an age, then the worse Schnabel seems as a technician or craftsman, the more interesting he becomes as an artist.

Julian Schnabel, South London Gallery, 65 Peckham Road, London SE5 0PT (0171-636 8891) until February 28

GALLERIES

Provocative Mr Schnabel

In the country of the damned

I fear a performer embodied the grief that has separated country music from British popular taste over the past 20 years. It is Reba McEntire. The 44-year-old singer, originally from Oklahoma, released her first album in 1978, since when she has sold more records than either Tammy Wynette or Dolly Parton. But until recently McEntire was unknown in this country. "We've got a lot of catching up to do," she informed the audience at the Theatre Royal on Sunday night at the tail-end of her first British tour.

The ensuing set incorporated many of the key songs from her career. From the opening bars of *Why Haven't I Heard From You*, McEntire assumed command of the fiercely raked stage, while her ten-piece band kept out of the spotlight. Their sound was in the modern country-rock idiom — dominated by guitars, horns and a solid backbeat while the pedal steel and fiddle were relegated to the margins — and it was easy to hear why, virtually alone of her peers from the 1970s and 1980s, McEntire has flourished in the era of Garth Brooks.

McEntire's speciality is the cheating song, and on numbers such as *What's in New England* and *You Lie* her tone was simultaneously accusatory



and pained. At her most ostensibly powerful she strayed into the blustery ballad territory of Celine Dion, but there were more intimate moments too, as when she sang *How Blue* as a harmony bluegrass rag, accompanied only by acoustic guitars and fiddle. Although she wrote none of them, various songs were linked to snippets of autobiographical information, including sentimental descriptions of her father's heart bypass surgery (*The Greatest Man I Never Knew*), and the night in 1991 when seven members of her band died in a plane crash (*For My Broken Heart*).

However, the high point of the show was a searing version of her Grammy award-winning song *Does He Love You*, a duet with backing singer Linda Davis playing the role of the Other Woman. The two women, each ring-fenced in their own circle of light, confronted each other with harshly opposing viewpoints, and a rich vein of highly charged emotion was explored.

DAVID SINCLAIR

Black Velvet

FOR someone whose career has been lived in rock's shadow, John Cale has recently been spending a lot of time in the limelight. Within the past month, there has been a BBC documentary, the publication of his autobiography and now his first tour in 15 years. And there's a compilation album out soon.

But, despite all this personal attention, Cale remains better known for his associations than for his solo projects. The most famous of those connections is, of course, with Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground. Press extracts of his book have dwelt almost exclusively on his time with that seminal 1960s band and its figurehead — even the advance publicity for the extracts used Reed's photo, not Cale's.

His live show, though, goes some way to righting the balance. At Cambridge's Corn Exchange there was only a passing reference to the Velvets, in a song from the tribute album to Andy Warhol, *Songs for Drella*. Otherwise, Cale's set drew from the mix of the experimental and the classical, of pure pop and punk passion, that has marked his restless musical life.

Cale began with three settings of Dylan's Thomas poems



The formal, hurried recitation of the first, set against a jagged piano accompaniment, gave way to the lyricism of the last, *Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night*. Cale's Welsh heritage was further invoked in the lovely *Child's Christmas in Wales*.

But, as always with Cale, the lilt of the rhythms and the easy grace of the melodies mask a darker sentiment than nostalgia. There is a steely-eyed, almost morbid harshness to his songwriting. His lyrics are littered with references to death, dying and hangman's nooses. Cale is not offering comfort to troubled souls; just more trouble.

He was aided by the subtle contributions of Lance Doss and Mark Deffenbaugh, the trill of Deffenbaugh's harmonica and the glissando from Doss's lap steel guitar serving as sound effects to Cale's scenarios. It is impossible not to be captivated by this intense, wise man and his sweet songs about bitter lessons.

JOHN STREET

ART GALLERIES

BLAKE CALDWELL Photographic works. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

OPERA & BALLET

LUCHY WINTERHIM — Estate Sale. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

JEAN VIBRANT Vibrant paintings. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

DANCE

SANKAI JUKU — First UK Appearance in 7 years. (RSC) (0171-636 8891) Opera tonight, 8pm. (S)

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FOOTBALL

Redknapp wants Lee as part of reshuffle

BY GEORGE CAULKIN AND STEPHEN WOOD

HARRY REDKNAPP, the West Ham United manager, last night signalled his intention to reinvest in a significant slice of the £75 million that the club received from the sale of John Harrison to Wimbledon last week by making an inquiry about Rob Lee, Newcastle United's England international.

Having taken Marco Negri on loan from Rangers until the end of the season, a midfield player and a right back remain Redknapp's priorities. Though Roud Gullit, the Newcastle manager, identified Lee, 33 next month, as a crucial cog in his plans shortly after taking control at St James' Park, a Newcastle source said that a bid of around £2 million would be sufficient to take the player to East London.

Lee, who signed a new three-year contract only last summer, has continually maintained his desire to remain in the North East for the rest of his career, despite near-constant rumours to the contrary since his arrival from Charlton Athletic in 1992. "I have always wanted to stay at Newcastle," he said after agreeing his new deal.

A move to the club that he supported as a boy would prove a considerable pull, however, and while he knew nothing of West Ham's interest

when contacted last night, Lee retains a home close to Upton Park.

Gullit will reply to Redknapp's bid by renewing his courtship of Eyal Berkovic, West Ham's Israel international midfielder player. Any swap arrangement would need to include a £2 million settlement in West Ham's favour, although whether Redknapp would wish to lose Berkovic after disposing of Harrison is open to question.

The FA Premier League has imposed a suspended line on Aston Villa over their refusal to pay Brighton £200,000 for Gareth Barry, their 17-year-old defender, and diverted some of Villa's television money to the Nationwide League third division club.

Villa had paid Brighton an initial £150,000, as ordered by a transfer tribunal, but then refused to hand over the £200,000 that they were told to pay when Barry made 20 appearances for the club, claiming that the youngster was overpriced and demanding that the tribunal revealed its reasons for the ruling.

The Premier League Board stepped in, gave the £200,000 to Brighton and handed Villa a suspended fine of £16,000, which will be called in if Villa do not pay up when Barry reaches other landmarks.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, the Manchester United striker, yesterday reiterated that he finds it preferable to be a reserve at Old Trafford rather than a first-team regular elsewhere, in the light of suggestions that West Ham are preparing an approach.

Solskjaer, scorer of ten goals this season, is behind Andy Cole and Dwight Yorke in the pecking order, which could damage his Norway international future, but the £5.5 million-rated striker said: "This is too big a club to leave behind and I want to win as much as I can with United."



Lee: transfer speculation

Defender going for a song

Russell Kempson on the warm weekend welcome awaiting Watford's recruit from Nigeria

Pre-match entertainment nowadays knows no bounds. Skydivers plummet to earth, cheerleaders strut their funky stuff and Cyril the Swan, Swansea City's manic mascot, flies in the face of authority. On Saturday, supporters of Watford will be treated to a unique event — the first public showing of the Adigbo, a traditional Nigerian dance, at an English football ground.

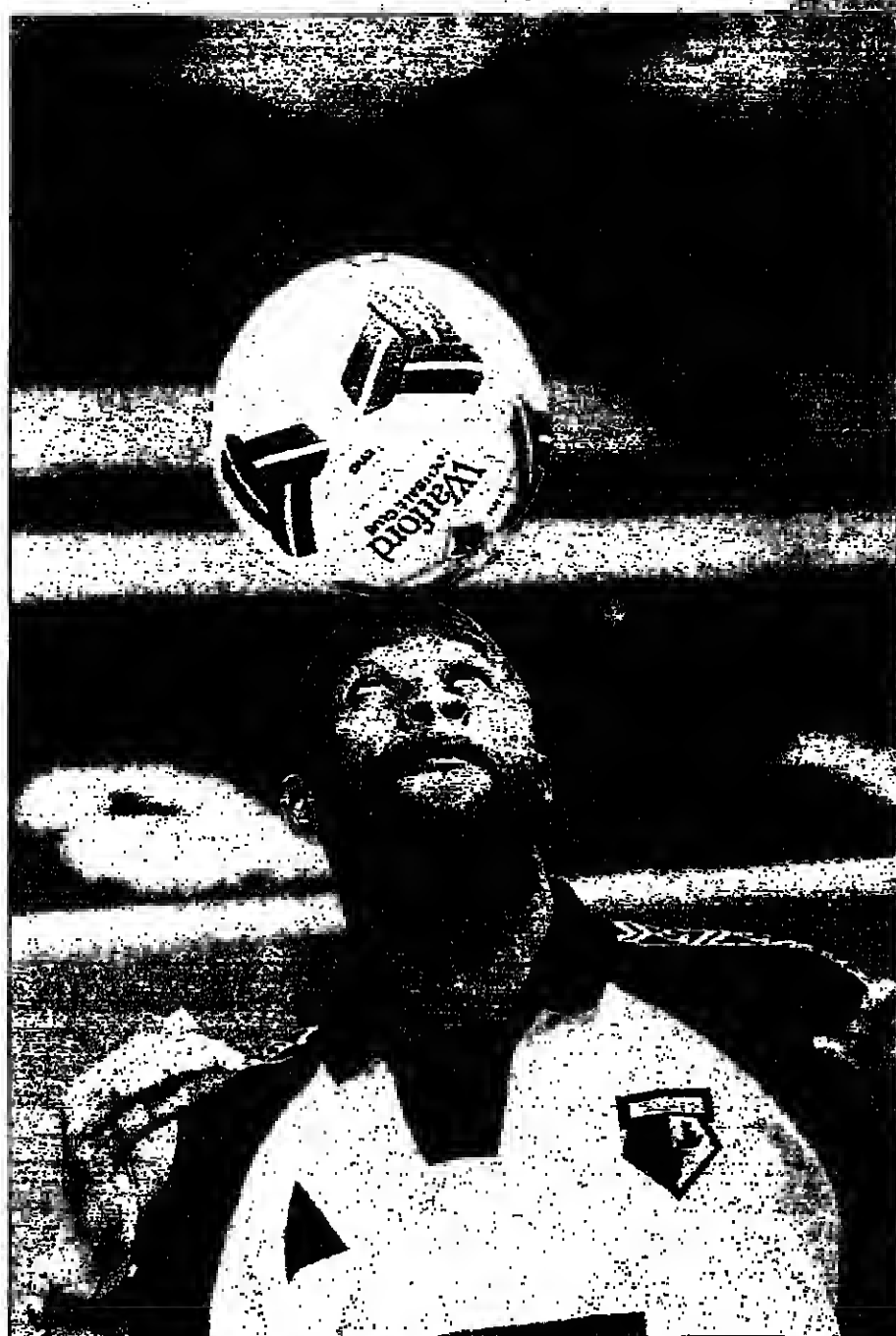
Before the Nationwide League first division match against West Bromwich Albion, Vicarage Road will reverberate to the sounds of Africa via the public-address system as the Adigbo group performs its ten-minute routine — barefooted, bare-chested (men only, if the weather allows) and in full traditional costume. Bells and drums will add to the scene.

For Ben Iroha, the Nigeria and Watford defender, the occasion holds special significance. It was arranged specifically for his benefit by Yibose, the Young Igbo Social Club, which is based in North London. Iroha, 29, was born in Uyo, a village in eastern Nigeria, of the Igbo tribe, one of the country's three largest.

"Some of our members went to the World Cup finals and really enjoyed it," Uzo Onuora, a Yibose spokesman and the sister of Ify Onuora, the Swindon Town striker, said. "When we heard that Ben had joined Watford, we wanted to do something to make him feel welcome here and honour him as a good representative of the Igbo community abroad."

The entertainment at Vicarage Road, after which Iroha will be presented with a commemorative plaque, dovetails neatly with Watford's vigorous stance against racism in the sport and Yibose's hopes for future links with the Igbo community in the UK. A trial with Bristol Rovers earlier this season proved fruitless — "I don't think they could afford me," he said — before he joined Watford.

"Everyone has been great to me, they have helped me



Iroha shows the skills that have brought him to Vicarage Road — and a unique reception

"It is a big honour. I hope it's not too cold for the dancers"

settles," he said, "but I miss my family so much. I have never been away from them for so long." His wife, Patsy, and children Larissa, three, and Elisha, six months, will travel to England from Washington next month.

The Igbo tribe is well represented in English football, if not by birthplace then by parentage, through Ekan Ekoku, of Wimbledon, Ugo Ehiogu, of Aston Villa, and Onuora and George Ndah, of

Swindon. Nwankwo Kanu, Arsenal's new £4 million signing from Internazionale, will swell the group further when his work permit is processed, and Yibose has already sent a letter of welcome to Highbury, a stone's throw from its headquarters.

Iroha helped to ease Kanu, 29, through his early years at the National club in Owerri. "He always came to me. I gave him courage," Iroha said. "He was a young boy then but he is a man now. Saturday will bring a big honour for me and I just hope it is not too cold for the dancers. If we can win as well, it will really make my day."

Howey rises from depths of despair

BY GEORGE CAULKIN

THE realisation began to crystallise at Bradford last August. In the midst of a run in the Newcastle United reserves, Steve Howey was kicked with such force that he thought his leg was broken. It was the night before Kenny Dalglish's departure from the club, another new manager to impress, a further two weeks aching on the treatment table, more needles, more frustration. A fortnight without training and the muscles in his calves — where a jigsaw of scars is the grisly token of two years ravaged by injury — were beginning to weaken.

There was another strain. Last season had been "stop-start", this was unproductive and he "couldn't picture a time when I'd be able to play two games in a row without being knocked back for a month". While packing it all in crossed his mind, that solution had been considered before, when dye was being flushed around his body to find a possible

blockage in his veins, or after his unimpeachable operation.

His wife, Angela, and the Newcastle medical staff had kept his chin up then. He could continue as he was — train, injury, play, injury, down his sorrow — but what would that solve? Instead, after talks with Roud Gullit — "he's very much a hands-on manager" — Newcastle's most accomplished central defender was dispatched to Lillieshall for rehabilitation. He had suggested a spell abroad, the club mentioned an "army" camp, it was a compromise.

He recalled the advice that Dalglish had once given him, about having one chance in football, and made a lifestyle decision, of some import. While "never a massive drinker", Howey, 27, thought of himself as the kind of person who, "if I went into the pub, I'd have to have a drink".

At Lillieshall, he simply stopped. "I was surprised at how well I coped without it," he said. Newcastle's Christmas party — complete with sheep's heart and *Ménage à trois* — was remarkable for another reason. Howey, turned up four hours late. He was, fit and he was sober. Although not teetotal, his consumption of alcohol is now "ridiculously less" and the effects have been dramatic.

Briefed to mark Duncan Ferguson, newly signed from Everton, in one of his first training sessions back from Lillieshall, Howey was named as captain for the visit of Wimbledon last November. "Not bad for a Sunderland lad," he was to chuckle later. Eight consecutive league appearances later — his most profitable sequence since the start of 1996 — he remains in the role.

Gullit described his return as akin to making a "£5 million signing". Comfortable on the ball, blessed with pace, Howey offers a calm authority rarely associated with defenders on Tyneside. Newcastle's last link to the pre-Kevin Keegan era, he admitted that he should "easily have made 300 appearances" for the club he joined 13 years ago.

Keegan initiated the switch from centre forward and he, and both his successors, have touted Howey's England credentials.

Howey has made four appearances, the last, three months before Euro 96, against Bulgaria. He will not broach the subject. As Dalglish once said: "His only aim should be to get on the training ground tomorrow". Assuming he makes that journey without mishap from now until Saturday, he will play against Bradford City in the FA Cup. All he hopes for is to stay in the team, although given that he has not agreed a new contract — his present deal expires this summer — his future is uncertain.

"I'd like to stay here, no doubt about it. I don't really want to move from the North East," he said. That Liverpool, Sunderland and Arsenal are eyeing him positively may seem confusing considering his injury record, but not when you see him striding into the centre circle or stretching for a clearance. Not when he answers a question, sitting in a pub, and reaches for the menu. And orders coffee.



FA CUP

Mabbutt calls it a day

GARY MABBUTT has been forced to retire from football after failing to recover from a serious injury. The former Tottenham Hotspur defender had spent four months in rehabilitation after surgery on a fractured left knee and had been considering offers from other clubs after Tottenham decided against renewing his contract last summer. Those plans have now been abandoned on the advice of a specialist.

Mabbutt, 37, was found to be diabetic in his early teens and once lapsed into a coma when he missed an insulin injection. He had his cheekbone shattered in a collision with John Fashanu in 1993 and broke his leg on the opening day of the 1996-97 season. But highlights of his career, 16 years of which were spent at White Hart Lane, included a UEFA Cup winner's medal in 1984 and lifting the FA Cup as captain of Tottenham in 1991. He made 618 appearances for

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

Spurs, scoring 36 goals, but the injuries caught up with him.

On his retirement, Mabbutt said: "It was a hard decision to make after my 21 years — five at Bristol Rovers and 16 at Tottenham — as a professional footballer because I have enjoyed my career immensely, but the demands and rigours that professional football makes on the body would continue to see my knee degenerate."

The final FA Cup third-round replay is contested tonight and if the priority for Notts County is to move out of the relegation zone in the Nationwide League, second division, the Sheffield United need to win the tie at Meadow Lane to freshen up their first division campaign.

With Cardiff City visiting the victors in the fourth round on Saturday, United must fancy their prospects of making the last 16 of a competition in which they reached the semi-finals last season. Steve Bruce, the Sheffield player-manager, has resisted attempts by Everton to buy Graham Stuart, the attacking midfielder player, while his side is in the Cup.

County, who were promoted from the third division last season, are desperate for reinforcements after a run of seven defeats in their past eight matches.



Mabbutt: serious injury

Joachim enjoys life at top

BY RICHARD HOBSON

THIS time last year, Gareth Barry had yet to sign professional terms with Aston Villa, Lee Hendrie was in the reserve side and Julian Joachim moped around Villa Park under the sobriquet "Super Sub". The idea that within 12 months, this trio would underpin an assault on the FA Cup, Premiership and the end of the West Midlands.

Yet the challenge of Villa, rejuvenated since John Gregory succeeded Brian Little as manager and with fresh young talent in key positions, shows no signs of waning. "We are playing some great football at the moment and I believe we can stay up there," Joachim said after scoring two goals in the 3-0 win against Everton on Monday night to put them level on points with Chelsea, the leaders on goal difference.

Joachim's finishing on both occasions testified to a player on top of his game and must have impressed Glenn Hod-



Joachim: precision

FOR THE RECORD

BOWLS

HOPKINSON-ON-SEA: World indoor championships. 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TENNIS

Rusedski makes early call on survival instincts

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT, IN MELBOURNE

GREG RUSEDSKI was entitled to savour his first victory of the year at the Australian Open here yesterday. The Briton shrugged off a back problem, a shortage of confidence, a rowdy chant-leader, an overzealous ballboy and Scott Draper, a man bristling with intent, to put the smile back on his uncharacteristically somber face.

Rusedski's 7-6, 2-6, 6-4, 7-6 victory was gained the hard way after Draper, world-ranked No 43, played a poor tie-break to drop the opening set. He then threatened to overwhelm Rusedski, who fended off four break points in the third before snatching the set, on his first opportunity, with a winning volley off the frame of his racket. "You buy the racket, you might as well use the whole thing," he quipped.

Draper then squandered the initiative in the fourth-set tie-break. He made three successive errors, the first a double fault on the surface at 5-4, to hand Rusedski, seeded No 8, a second-round encounter with Paul Goldstein, a qualifier from the United States.



Kournikova hits a forehand during her victory over Craybas

Memories of Rusedski's two first-round defeats this year dissolved in the wake of his triumph. However, he has fresh concerns on his mind after requiring corsair treatment to his back.

"I had a few muscle spasms after practice on Friday," he said. "It turned out fine after a good stretch and some anti-inflammatory tablets." Rusedski coped manfully with a swirling wind, which can affect his service rhythm. "These are the sort of days where upsets can easily happen," he said.

Happen, they certainly did. Carlos Moyá, seeded No 4 after a banner year in 1998, succumbed to Nicolas Pietrangeli, a quarter-finalist here last year. Kiefer obliged 6-7, 6-4, 7-6, 6-3 and now has an excellent opportunity to reach the same stage.

Two other seeds in Kiefer's half of the draw perished yesterday. Albert Costa, seeded No 12, fell in four sets to Martin Damm, while Cedric Pioline, seeded No 13, was spared no embarrassment by Lleyton Hewitt, the emerging talent from Australia.

Hewitt, 17, conjured spectacular winners from all angles of the court to reduce Pioline, of France, to rubble.

From 3-2 down in the opening set, Hewitt dropped just two of the next 18 games to prevail 6-3, 6-1, 6-4. Pioline's reverse meant that, including two withdrawals through injury, six of the 16 men's seeds failed to survive the opening round.

Petr Korda, the champion, was unconvincing in accounting for Gaelo Blanco, of Spain, in a match memorable only for Blanco refusing to shake Korda's hand at the end. Blanco felt that Korda feigned an ankle injury in the opening set, for which the unseeded Korda called a medical time-out.

"I have never not shaken my opponent's hand," Blanco said, "but when someone lies to you, you cannot trust them." Korda, who cited a High Court action over his failed drugs test as the reason for refusing to answer questions on the subject, said he was unsure whether he would be fit to play tomorrow.

Of eight women's seeds in action yesterday, only Amanda Coetzer dropped a set en route to the second round. The day's highlight was Monica Seles's return to a country where she has not been beaten in six tournaments, including four Australian Opens, the last in 1996. It proved a happy return: Seles, seeded No 6, dismissed Tina Krizan, of Slovakia, for the loss of just one game in 41 minutes.

Steffi Graf, seeded No 10, took one minute fewer to beat Paola Suarez, of Argentina, 6-0, 6-3. Anna Kournikova's service problems continue: she hit 23 double faults on the way to defeating Jill Craybas, of the United States, 7-6, 7-5. Kournikova has now dispensed 116 double faults in her past six matches.



Rusedski shows his delight after winning an eventful match against Draper in four sets

Agassi skips Davis Cup

ANDRE AGASSI yesterday ruled himself out of the United States team to face Great Britain in the Davis Cup, ensuring that his country will be seriously under-strength for the tie in Birmingham on April 2 (Julian Muscat writes).

Agassi, ranked No 6 in the world, joins Pete Sampras, the world No 1, and Michael Chang in bypassing a tie that brings together the two nations that established the Davis Cup 100 years ago.

"It doesn't fit into my plans with reference to my goals

this year," Agassi said after routing Herman Gmny, of Argentina, in the first round of the Australian Open.

Agassi said that the row he had with the United States Tennis Federation over the venue for his country's semi-final defeat by Italy last year had influenced his decision. "I was very frustrated and drained emotionally through it all and that, I'm sure, played a part," he said.

The United States will choose their two singles players from Todd Martin, Jan-Michael Gambill and Jim

Courier. All have confirmed their availability, but Greg Rusedski, the Great Britain No 2, kept his guard up on hearing of Agassi's absence.

"Obviously it's going to be a little better than seeing Agassi and Sampras across the net," Rusedski ventured. "But Martin, the way he's playing, will probably be ranked in the top ten by then and Gambill has beaten Tim [Henman] every time they have played. It is going to be very difficult for us."

Britain meet the United States in the first round of the World Group.

OLYMPICS

Haggman resigns in bribes scandal

BY ROB HUGHES

PIRJO HAGGMAN yesterday became the first Olympian to resign after being implicated in the Salt Lake City 2002 Winter Games bribery scandal. A 100 and 400 metres runner at the 1976 and 1980 Olympics and a PE teacher in Finland, Haggman in 1981 became the first woman on the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

A physical education teacher in Finland, Haggman, 47, pleaded guilty yesterday to bribery, not corruption, and said she had not broken the Olympic Oath. Nonetheless, Juan Antonio Samaranch, the president of the IOC, accepted with alacrity, and with thanks, her resignation.

Haggman's husband had been named as a beneficiary of Salt Lake City favour when he was contracted to carry out an environmental study for the bidding committee. This conflict of interests pales in comparison with IOC members being linked to gifts, scholarships and land deals amounting to \$600,000.

So far, 13 letters have gone out to members among the 115-strong IOC but, despite reports impugning senior members, Haggman is so far the sole resignation. Others must appear before an IOC panel on Sunday, but may cling to their seats until mid-March.

Meanwhile, the Mayor of Adelaide claimed that three members of the Commonwealth Games Organisation — from Sri Lanka, Pakistan and an unnamed African country — sought five-year scholarships for relatives in exchange for votes towards Adelaide's failed bid for the Commonwealth Games in 1998.

Tony Banks, the Minister for Sport, yesterday insisted on BBC Radio 5 Live that the Football Association's financial assistance to nations that have FIFA votes for the 2006 World Cup should be seen in the nature of "overseas development aid... that is not the same as people pushing money over the table in brown paper envelopes".

SPORT IN BRIEF

Howley retains captaincy of Wales

RUGBY UNION: Robert Howley has been appointed as Wales captain for the Five Nations Championship this season. The Cardiff and British Isles scrum half, who took over as national team captain when Gwyn Jones was forced to retire 13 months ago, will lead Wales for a second successive championship season.

"Rob has done a good job for Wales since he took over and I have no doubt that he is the right player to captain us again," Graham Henry, the Wales coach, said.

RUGBY LEAGUE: Bradford Bulls, who yesterday announced that Asics, the sports equipment supplier, will sponsor the club this season, also unveiled their latest signing, David Boyle, a back-row forward from Canberra Raiders. Boyle joins Henry Paul, Michael Withers, Nick Zisti, Scott Naylor and Lee Radford in a new-look squad.

ICE HOCKEY: Cardiff Devils' Sekonda Superleague title aspirations suffered a blow yesterday when Mike MacWilliam was given a six-game suspension. The punishment follows a brawl in the home match against Nottingham Panthers on January 14.

SOFTBALL: Prize money in the Open Championship, which reached £1 million for the first time only six years ago, is being increased to £1.85 million for the return of the event to Carnoustie from July 15 to 18.

BOXING: Paul Ingle has turned down world championship contests against Naseem Hamed, the World Boxing Organisation (WBO) title-holder, and Antonio Cermeno, the World Boxing Association champion, to defend his European featherweight title against Steve Robinson, the former WBO champion, in Scarborough on March 6.

Why England failed to reach an accord

BY MARK SOUSTER

RUGBY supporters could be forgiven for feeling non-plussed by the Byzantine events of the past 24 hours. One minute England are out of the Five Nations Championship, the next they are back in, having made a rapid volte-face. The root cause of the dispute, on the surface at least, is the revenue from multimillion-pound television deals.

In 1996, England broke with tradition and signed a five-year contract with BSkyB worth £87.5 million, £22.5 million of which was earmarked for club rugby, and the remaining £65 million for Five Nations matches at Twickenham and autumn hemisphere countries, plus other club games, including the Varsity match.

The fact that England chose to act unilaterally led to their temporary expulsion from the championship at that time. They were readmitted only after they had signed the peace accord, which set out two fundamental principles — that the countries would act collectively and revenue would be distributed equally. This was not

possible in the short term because of the BSkyB deal, but holds true after 2002 when the contract expires.

At the time, England agreed to have a valuation put on the Five Nations element of the £65 million; their alleged failure to live up to that pledge led directly to their expulsion on

Ivan Francescato, the former Italy centre, has died after a suspected heart attack at his home in Treviso. Francescato, 31, won 38 caps between 1990 and 1997 and was central to the emergence of rugby in his country. He was the youngest of four brothers, all Italy international players.

Monday. From 1996 to mid-1998 the parties attempted to reach agreement between themselves; when it subsequently proved impossible to agree, an independent valuer, an accountant named Arthur Harward, was appointed. At that point the Rugby Football

Union refused to acknowledge the legality of the accord per se. Harward will now consider preliminary submissions from all sides on February 5.

Three years ago it was estimated that the Five Nations portion was worth more about £34.5 million of the £65 million — equal to a notional £2.3 million each for Ireland, Wales and Scotland over five years. That sum would be put in to a common pool, together with £32 million from the Celtic nations — the bulk of the proceeds from their own deal negotiated with the BBC. With further ancillary income the total in the pool would amount to £70 million. Whether Harward agrees with that assessment remains to be seen.

The accord provides a formula for the distribution of that money. Ninety per cent would be divided between the four participants — thus, on the above figures, each would receive £3.5 million annually for five years. Another five per cent would be prize-money for the Five Nations, and the remaining five per cent apportioned according to the number of clubs in each union. Historically, France, being in a different legal jurisdiction, negotiated their own television deal, a provision allowed for in the accord as long as the RFU had the rights to negotiate individually. The RFU believed France should pool its revenue, a condition England attached to acceptance of the accord this weekend.

Television revenue underpins union finances. The Scots have an overdraft of £17 million, England's debt is £34 million and Wales will need a loan of more than £50 million for the Millennium Stadium. Thus, jeopardising that revenue would spell financial suicide.

Richmond have rearranged their Allied Dunbar Premiership first division fixture against Leicester for next Tuesday, at the Madejski Stadium in Reading. The match should have taken place last night, but was postponed because of a waterlogged pitch. The Challenge Trophy game last night involving Pontypridd and Edinburgh Reivers has been postponed to tonight.

Reivers salute the end of a sad ferret tale

The Edinburgh Reivers spent a fruitless time in Wales last week for two Challenge Trophy games against Pontypridd and Caerphilly, both of which were washed out. People were puzzled to see the players turn up for one training session wearing black armbands and then observe a ten-second silence

in memory of Alan Tait's pet white ferret Rex, for it is he, in missing in action, presumed dead. Tait was an inimitable, Rex is the best ferret he has had and has killed thousands of rabbits in his time. According to Craig Chalmers, it was the most exciting thing that happened all week. Tait's feelings on the countryside are well-known. He boycotted Tony Blair's reception at No 10 for the 1997 Lions in protest at the Government's policy on hunting.

Tasty tulips

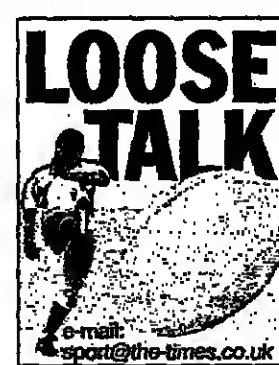
Spotted in London's Dover Street Wine Bar in the small hours last week, after the Rugby Writers' dinner, were Gareth Rees and Sean Lineen, indulging in a tulip-eating contest. The Canadian and the Kiwi-Scott each chomped their way through three — stems included — before declaring an honourable draw. Lineen said: "I wasn't able to go to the toilet for three days."

Replay it again

The Teleret experiment in South Africa proved so successful that Samzar — the combined South Africa, New Zealand and Australia rugby authority — is to approach the International Board for permission to extend the project during the Super 12 and other domestic competitions. The pilot scheme covered ten under-21 games and took less than a minute to view replays from three different angles and inform the referee.

Touchy judge

Dog bites man? A touch judge was sent off during the Chichester versus Maidstone London III South East league match just before Christmas... for



punching a player? No names have been revealed, but one witness said the touch judge took exception to a tackle by a Maidstone player, stormed on the pitch and berated the offender, waving his flag in his face. The player brushed the flag away, only for the official to retaliate with a right hook. The referee dismissed him and called for a replacement. So far no disciplinary action has been taken.

Croft cracker

You can take the man out of Hendy, but you cannot take Hendy out of the man. The BBC Wales Sports Personality of the Year Awards last week were enlivened by an interview with Robert Croft, the Glamorgan spin bowler, five from Brisbane, where England had just beaten Sri Lanka. Questioned on the hostile nature of Aussie cricket crowds, Croft said: "When you've been to as many Hendy-Pontarddulais derbies as I have, you



Croft: Hendy favourite

become used to people questioning your parenthood." Peter Jenkins, team manager of Hendy, from the Welsh League fifth division, confirmed that Croft was a favourite at the club in his youth. "He played for us as a schoolboy before joining Glamorgan," he said.

Team talk-in

Never let it be said that top clubs do not communicate with their members — unless it is London Scottish. Leicester have issued a five-point explanation over the difficulties of fielding their strongest XV on a regular basis (injuries, international requirements etc). The club has also offered a commitment that admission prices for "friendly or minor competition games" in future will reflect the strength of the playing XV and the significance the club attaches to specific competitions. The first of a series of meetings will be held next Thursday, when members will have the chance to air their views.

Rugby for Rugby

Rugby's coming home... in World Cup year, Rugby School, the birthplace of the game, is hosting a series of youth development courses during the Easter and summer holidays. They are organised by the Academy of Rugby, which has invited 12,000 schoolboys from all over the country. It is the first time the school, where William Webb Ellis picked up the ball and ran, has committed itself to a long-term rugby programme.

Congratulations to those sopranos from Wasps who raised more than £1,700 for Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children at two carol singing sessions before Christmas. At 9am yesterday, Lawrence Dailigto, Mark Weedon, Shane Roiser and Fraser Waters were on parade at the hospital to present the cheque, meet staff and children, and tour the wards. And all that before training!

MARK SOUSTER

SNOOKER

Small wonder lifts Scotland

BY PHIL YATES

CHRIS SMALL, the least experienced member of snooker's reassembled "dream team", played a vital role as Scotland continued their relentless progress towards a place in the Nations Cup final by beating Wales 8-3 in Newcastle yesterday.

The pedigree of John Higgins, Stephen Hendry and Alan McManus is well-known, but with two semi-final appearances in world-ranking events the highlight of his eight-year professional career, Small's ability to cope with the unique demands of team play was open to question.

Small, however, won both of his singles frames during Scotland's 8-3 victory over England on Saturday and was equally impressive against the Welsh, who had high hopes of an upset after overcoming Ireland 8-3 in their opening match.

"It has been a great start to the tournament for me as an

individual and obviously for the lads as a whole," Small said. "I feel quite relaxed, having three guys like I've got alongside me, but it's certainly different from just thinking about yourself."

Small partnered Hendry to beat the pairing of Darren Morgan and Dominic Dale, made a 66 break in defeating Dale and calmly stroked in a tricky black to a middle pocket against Matthew Stevens.

McManus, who initiated the rout with a 100 break against Mark Williams in the first frame, also won his two singles and Hendry prevailed in two of three, but all agreed that Small was the outstanding performer.

Scotland, whose last international involvement resulted in an effortless triumph at the 1996 World Cup, must now beat either Northern Ireland on Friday or Ireland on Saturday to guarantee their participation in the final.

SKI CLUB	Depth (cm)		Conditions	Runs to Resort	Clt/pt	Weather (°C)	Last snow
	L	U					
Andorra Soldeu	80	100	Good	Open	Powder	Fine	2 17/1
Austria Kitzbühel	20	80	Good	Hard	Varied	Fine	1 14/1
France St. Anton	20	70	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	4 14/1
Italy Cortina	30	300	Fair	Open	Varied	Sun	0 14/1
Spain La Molina	100	140	Good	Open	Powder	Fair	1 18/1
Switzerland Verbier	70	180	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	3 14/1
Switzerland Zermatt	50	145	Good	Open	Varied	Fine	3 18/1
Switzerland St. Moritz	80	220	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	2 14/1
Switzerland La Thuile	65	110	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	2 14/1
Switzerland La Tignes	68	100	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	3 14/1
Switzerland Les Arcs	64	180	Fair	Open	Heavy	Fine	4 14/1
Switzerland Megève	65	140	Fair	Open	Heavy	Fine	4 14/1
Switzerland Méribel	50	180	Fair	Open	Heavy	Sun	3 14/1
Switzerland Tignes	66	170	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	3 14/1
Switzerland Val Thorens	70	130	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	3 14/1
Switzerland Val d'Isère	65	150	Good	Open	Heavy	Sun	1 14/1
Italy Cortina	45	160	Good	Open	Heavy	Fine	0 14/1
Italy Cortina	45	80	Good	Open	Powder	Sun	2 14/1
Italy Cortina	60	120	Good	Open	Crusty	Sun	6 13/1
Italy Garmisch	70	70	Good	Open	Varied	Cloud	3 17/1
Switzerland Crans Montana	20	115	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	6 14/1
Switzerland Davos	45	130	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	10 14/1
Switzerland Grindelwald	35	130	Good	Open	Varied	Fine	2 14/1
Switzerland Klosters	35	135	Good	Open	Varied	Fine	1 14/1
Switzerland St. Moritz	40	80	Good	Open	Varied	Sun	2 14/1
Switzerland Verbier	20	180	Hard	Open	Varied	Sun	3 14/1
Switzerland Villars	40	120	Fair	Open	Varied	Fair	3 14/1
Switzerland Zermatt	42	150	Hard	Open	Crusty	Fine	2 17/1
United States Aspen	75	95	Good	Open	Varied	Cloud	3 18/1

http://www.ski-club.co.uk

L = lower slopes, U = upper slopes

Enigmatic variations on using a pixie hood

When you hear that the odds against deciphering Germany's Enigma code during the Second World War were many times greater than the odds against winning the National Lottery, it conjures up an image of Bletchley Park, the country house near Milton Keynes, as a vast bazaar. Here you find punters — a curious array of academics, schoolboys and undergraduates — competing feverishly to yell "Housey, housey!" as soon as they had cracked the latest German transmission.

Obviously it wasn't quite that weird. It was weird, Sarah Baring, who worked there, recalled in *Station X* (Channel 4), that "These were one cryptographer with red hair and a red beard and he studied Japanese in the evenings as a relief from his cryptology. But in the winter he wore a blue pixie hood on his head. A pixie hood's

the thing you put on babies' heads. And I always thought that was very strange. I never knew quite why he did it."

Gwen Watkins, a WAAF at Bletchley, remembered Joshi Cooper well. "He would walk round the lake every summer evening with a coffee cup. And when he'd finished his coffee he'd look in a demented way at the coffee cup as though wondering what to do with it and throw it straight over his shoulder into the lake. Every evening. These geniuses, luckily, were the people on whom our lives depended. At least half of the people there I would have thought — outside Bletchley — absolutely mad," says Watkins, frankly.

Their achievement is still breathtaking. According to Tony Sale, of the Bletchley Park Trust, "If I sent just one message on an Enigma machine today, it would still take a Super Kray computer — the fastest in the world — a year to go through searching for that one message without supporting evidence as to what the message settings might have been."

I must have taken them quite a while to twig that it even was a code. German being a jangle of consonants at the best of times. So you can imagine what sort of people they drafted in to crack it. Arthur Levinson, one of the code-breakers, remembers: "Anthropologists, Egyptologists, paleontologists and even an occasional lawyer turned out to have the knack." Their descendants are still engaged in similar work today, only this time the Germans are on our side and the indecipherable messages concern such European-Union matters as the euro and the harmonisation of European laws.

It is quaint to see — among the riveting archive footage dug up for this four-part series — some film of

chestrated to wrong-foot the enemy (First German Spy: "I think this Bletchley place is the nerve centre of Britain's code-breaking operations." Second German Spy: "Have you seen what that guy over there with that baby's blue pixie hood? I'll bet you a hundred marks that this is a lunatic asylum.")

But they weren't all code-breaking geniuses. Geoffrey Tandy, a marine biologist, was among the first to be recruited. Nigel Forward, a Bletchley code-breaker, recalls how Tandy joined the team: "He was an expert in cryptograms. They're a very elementary form of biological life. And somebody said, 'Ah, cryptograms, that's what we want' and sent him to Bletchley with the slight error that they were really looking for people who were good at cryptograms." But Tandy probably survived without anybody even noticing. Compared with wearing pixie hoods and tossing coffee cups in the lake, being

able to hold forth on the subject of elementary biological lifeforms must have seemed quite normal.

Another hard nut to crack: why are people who are stinking rich often so unhappy (obviously poor people are often even unhappier; much unhappier). The Richest Little Girl in the World (ITV) inspected the Onassis family curse of unhappiness that hangs over 13-year-old Athina — Christina's daughter, Aristotle's granddaughter — like a pigeon waiting to poop. When the young Athina said that she liked the nursery rhyme *Baa Baa Black Sheep*, Christina did the motherly thing of buying Athina her own flock of sheep to play with. Christina herself found the right little boy that lives down the lane, although she did buy several others that didn't work out. Athina is young, but already very smart. Smart enough to remark that: "If I

REVIEW

Joe Joseph

Second World War German code-breakers undergoing training: they are sitting on a platform deciphering Morse code while the platform is rocked like a rodeo horse, so as to train them to decipher Morse code under any conditions. Meanwhile their English counterparts were wearing blue pixie hoods on their heads and tossing the crockery into the lake. Maybe this behaviour was deliberately or-

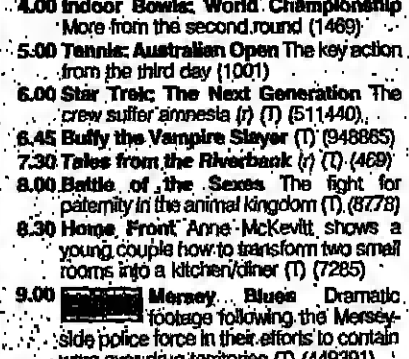
- BBC1**
- 6.00am Business Breakfast (50372)
 - 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (1) (98001)
 - 9.00am Killy (1) (845469)
 - 9.45 The Vanessa Show (1) (581833)
 - 10.05 News Weather (1) (777783)
 - 11.00am Real Rooms (783110)
 - 11.25am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (1) (774469)
 - 11.55am News Weather (1) (980365)
 - 12.00pm Call My Bluff (67440)
 - 12.30am Battersea Dogs' Home (25932)
 - 1.00pm One O'Clock News Weather (1) (80448)
 - 1.30am National News Weather (8647846)
 - 1.40am Neighbours (1) (6518285)
 - 2.05pm Iremode (1) (7441759)
 - 2.55pm Going for a Song (833614)
 - 3.20 The Weather Show (1) (276765)
 - 3.25 Children's BBC: Playdays (282084)
 - 3.45 Little Monsters (862885)
 - 3.50am Chucklevision (868927) 4.10 See It Saw It (854579) 4.35 The Wild House (1493001) 5.00am Newsround (830730) 5.10 Blue Peter (870285)
 - 5.35am Neighbours (1) (608198)
 - 6.00am Six O'Clock News Weather (1) (301)
 - 6.30am Regional News Magazine (643)



The leopard is perfectly adapted for hunting at night (2pm)

- 7.00am Wildlife on One insight into the nocturnal hunting techniques of the leopard, which relies on smell and hearing to capture its prey in pitch darkness (1) (1488)
- 7.30am Dream House: John Weir struggles to complete the grass roof (1) (227)
- 8.00am Strangling: Rodman: Ayrer Richardson brings a little Miami glamour to a Cardiff living room (1) (9376)
- 8.30am Battersea Dogs' Home: A litter of puppies delivered by Caesarean section are given slim chances of survival (1) (90310)
- 8.50am National Lottery: Amazing Luck: Stories how rare the prizes of the Lottery were discovered (1) (85001)
- 9.00am Nine O'Clock News: Regional News Weather (1) (2339)
- 9.30am The X-Files Part one: Mulder and Scully search desperately for clues to a series of mass killings in which UFO abductees are being burnt alive (1) (87865)
- 10.15am Behind the scenes at Billingsgate fish market (1/5) (180049)
- 11.10am Look for Murder (TVM 1983): A man takes a holiday with his wife, little realising she intends to make it a vacation he'll never forget. Starring Virginia Madsen and Richard Thomas. Directed by Nathaniel Gordon (1) (25235)
- 12.35am Moving Targets (TVM 1988): A teenage boy returns home from summer camp to find his family missing. Thriller, starring Jason Bateman. Directed by Chris Thompson (1) (970288)
- 2.00am Weather (804518)
- 2.05am BBC News 24 (74142976)

- BBC2**
- 7.00am Children's BBC Breakfast Show: Dilly the Dinosaur (296007) 7.05am Teletubbies (2703204) 7.30am Secret Spies (296007) 7.35am The Really Wild Show (200577) 8.10am Newsround (830730) 8.20am Taz-Mania (863656) 8.40am Police Dot Shorts (861538) 8.50am Brum (800422) 9.00am Images of Style (7831594) 9.10am What? Where? When? Why? (871170) 9.25am The Art of the Word (801846) 9.45am Words and Pictures (801846) 10.00am Teletubbies (80339) 10.30am Numberline (567730) 10.45am Cats' Eyes (567285) 11.00am Around Scotland (123696) 11.20am The Geography Programme (825575) 1.40am Science in Action (808117) 12.00pm Newsround (475685) 12.15am Hello aus Berlin (813111) 12.30am Working Lunch (23594) 1.00pm Brum (73449914)
 - 1.10am The Antiques Show (1) (8234577)
 - 1.40am The Arts and Crafts Show (8617977)
 - 2.10am Indoor Bowls: World Championship: Further second-round action (2295952)
 - 2.40am News Weather (1) (872117)
 - 2.45am Westminster: The latest parliamentary news (1) (851914)
 - 3.55am News Weather (1) (933049)
 - 4.00am Indoor Bowls: World Championship: More from the second round (1489)
 - 5.00am Tennis: Australian Open: The key action from the third day (1001)
 - 6.00am Star Trek: The Next Generation: The crew suffer amnesia (1) (511440)
 - 6.45am Buffy the Vampire Slayer (1) (848885)
 - 7.30am Tales from the Riverbank (1) (469)
 - 8.00am Battle of the Sexes: The fight for paternity in the animal kingdom (1) (8778)
 - 8.30am Home Front: Anne McKevitt, shows a young couple how to transform a small room into a kitchen (1) (7285)
 - 9.00am Mervyn: Blues: Dramatic footage following the Mervyn-side police force in their efforts to contain waters over drug territories (1) (449391)



Ben and Jerry, who started their own ice-cream company (8.50pm)

- 9.50am Blood on the Carpet: Two hippies who fought the giant conglomerate Haagen-Dazs by producing their own ice-cream (1) (269295)
- 10.25am Whitewashed Shorts (1) (74075)
- 10.30am Newsnight (1) (333852)
- 11.15am Picture: This poignant film capturing a cancer victim's final wishes (874372)
- 11.45am 100 Short drama about a great-uncle with an unusual diet (1) (272830)
- 11.55am Weather (840204)
- 12.00am Despatch Box: Political news (33773)
- 12.30am BBC Learning Zone: Open University: Passing Judgements 1.00 The British Family: Sources and Myths 1.30 The French Revolution: Impact and Sources 2.00 School Languages 4.00 Get By in French 5.00 Business and Training: Voluntary Matters 5.30 20 Steps to Better Management 5.45 Open University: TV 6.35 A Language for Movement

- HTV**
- 5.30am ITN Morning News (8682)
 - 6.00am GMTV (8560594)
 - 9.25am Trisha (1) (3334855)
 - 10.30am This Morning (1) (2490157)
 - 12.15pm HTV News (1) (812643)
 - 12.30am ITN Late Night News (1) (10020)
 - 1.00am WEST: West Star Richard Wyatt, Lloyd and correspondents are in Cleveland, where they review local developments (91556)
 - 1.00am WALS: Shortland Street: Jenny buries the hatchet (1) (5158)
 - 1.30am Snooker: Nations Cup: Live coverage from Newcastle as the Republic of Ireland take on Northern Ireland (1) (5237407)
 - 3.15am ITN News Headlines (1) (275022)
 - 3.20am HTV News (1) (275293)
 - 3.25am CTV: Mopstop: The show (2742558) 3.35am Teddycars (1) (820488) 4.10am Whizzing (8348758) 4.40am Mad for a (7878391)
 - 5.10am A Country Practice: Esme and Perce embark on a quest (797402)
 - 5.40am ITN Early Evening News (1) (246407)
 - 5.55am HTV Crimestoppers (200846)
 - 6.00am Home and Away: Sally does a spot of match-making (1) (58135)
 - 6.25am WALS: Wales Tonight (1) (418914)
 - 6.25am WEST: HTV Weather (810372)
 - 6.30am WEST: The West Tonight (1) (339)
 - 7.00am Emmerdale: Graham confesses he loves Rachel (1) (5558)
 - 7.30am Coronation Street: Vera looks for a job (1) (223)



John Nettles and Daniel Casey star as Barnaby and Troy (8pm)

- 8.00am Midsomer Murders: New series. When a local property developer is violently murdered, Barnaby and Troy set out to find a motive for the killing. Starring John Nettles, Daniel Casey, Michael Baines and Judy Parfitt. Includes Lottery Result (1/4) (1) (8643)
- 10.00am News at Ten: Weather (1) (83665)
- 10.30am HTV News and Weather (1) (826865)
- 10.40am Snooker: Nations Cup Highlights of the Republic of Ireland v Northern Ireland (788372)
- 11.15am WEST: Ronsdale: Reno protects his former karate teacher from a revenge-bait fellow alumnus (820198)
- 11.45am WALS: The Front Row Welsh Rugby Union Challenge Trophy (820198)
- 12.40am Between Love and Hate (1993): Drama about a teenager who becomes a swimming instructor on vacation, on vacation from college and falls for the mother of one of his students. Starring Lucy Lister-Jones. Directed by Rod Hardy (844150)
- 2.20am Masterclass: With the comedy writer Carole Lane (787866)
- 2.45am Judge Judy: Real-life cases (45173)
- 3.15am Trisha Show earlier (1) (156003)
- 4.15am Paul: Lethal battle of the scenes of the 1992 Football World Cup (835821)
- 4.50am ITN Nightvision (8170832)
- 5.00am Coronation Street (1) (88666)

- CENTRAL**
- As HTV West except:
 - 12.20-12.30pm Central News (6744391)
 - 1.00-1.30am Echo Point (81556)
 - 3.20-3.25am Central News (275293)
 - 5.10-5.40am Shortland Street (7957402)
 - 6.25-7.00am Central News Weather (418914)
 - 10.30-10.40am Central News Weather (826865)
 - 2.55-4.15am Judge Judy (822722)
 - 4.15am Central Jobstar: 98 (8051082)
 - 5.20-5.30am Asian Eye (408867)

- As HTV West except:
- 12.15-12.27pm Westcountry News (812643)
- 12.27-12.30am Illuminations (8752310)
- 1.00-1.20am Emmerdale (81558)
- 3.20-3.25am Westcountry News (275293)
- 5.08am Birthday People (839440)
- 5.10-5.40am Home and Away (7957402)
- 6.00-7.00am Westcountry News (832865)
- 10.30-10.40am Westcountry News (832865)
- 11.45-12.40am Anatomy of Disaster (820198)
- 5.00-5.30am FreeScreen (86666)

- As HTV West except:
- 12.15-12.30pm Meridian News (812643)
- 1.00-1.30am Shortland Street (81556)
- 5.10-5.40am Home and Away (7957402)
- 6.00am Meridian Tonight (759)
- 6.30-7.00am Meridian News (832865)
- 10.30-10.40am Meridian News (832865)
- 11.45-12.40am Meridian News (832865)
- 5.00-5.30am FreeScreen (86666)

- As HTV West except:
- 12.15-12.30pm Anglia Air Watch (6730198)
- 12.30-12.35am Anglia News (6744391)
- 1.00-1.30am Save Your Bacon (81556)
- 5.10-5.40am Shortland Street (7957402)
- 6.23am Anglia Weather (811001)
- 6.25-7.00am Anglia News (418914)
- 10.29am Anglia Air Watch (737001)
- 10.30-10.40am Anglia News (832865)
- 11.40am Crime Night (758204)
- 11.55-12.40am Tales from the Crypt (735881)

Starts: 6.00am Sesame Street (1) (21546759)

- 7.00am The Big Breakfast (47768594) 8.00am Yagollon: Antoine De Caunes Tour de France (16329440) 9.30am Rait-Tai-Tai (83395594) 9.45am Book Box (8331049) 10.00am Stage Two Science (8339758) 10.15am All About Us (83540310) 10.30am The French Programme (17022833) 10.50am Stop, Look, Listen (83705001) 11.00am Durr Aer Tri (8806204) 11.15am Tackling Technology (8888827) 11.30am Powerhouse (1) (2452404) 12.00pm Sesame Street (1) (21546759) 12.30am Sesame Street (1) (8331778) 1.00am Planned Plant (1) (47761681) 1.30am Roots to Success (1) (8912881) 1.45am FILM: A Day of Thanks on Walton Mountain (1) (8023202) 3.30am Hampton Court Palace (1) (8023202) 4.00am Fifteen-to-One (1) (832020) 4.30am Road Larks (1) (8303204) 5.00am Planned Plant (1) (8303204) 5.30am Countdown (1) (8020556) 6.00am Newsnight (1) (8303204) 6.10am Home (1) (8303204) 7.00am Posh & Becks (1) (8303204) 7.30am Newsnight (1) (8303204) 8.00am The Philanthropist (1) (8303204) 8.30am Celebrity ER (1) (4852038) 9.00am Brookside 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MOTOR RALLYING 42

McRae defies critics with focused Monte Carlo display

SPORT

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 20 1999

FOOTBALL 40

Tribal welcome in store for Iroha at Watford

Baister brokers peace deal

England back down over Five Nations

By MARK SOUSTER

AFTER 24 hours that bordered on farce and after what appears nothing less than a humiliating climbdown, England were readmitted to the Five Nations Championship yesterday. Brian Baister, the Rugby Football Union (RFU) chairman, acted as peacemaker by flying to Glasgow to deliver a letter to Allan Hosié that set out the unqualified acceptance of the accord that had originally been signed in 1996.

Once it had been accepted that the ten-year accord, which details the distribution of television revenue, was legally binding and enforceable, Hosié, the chairman of the Five Nations Committee, agreed that a meeting should be held as soon as possible to address RFU concerns on aspects of the agreement. Any amendment would be put before the committee for approval. England will be represented by Francis Baron, the RFU chief executive, Bill Beaumont, Graeme Cattermole and Malcolm Phillips.

There was widespread relief that a settlement had been reached, but also dismay especially within England — that the situation had been allowed to deteriorate to such an extent. Baister, who met Hosié with Beaumont, said that the solution was "in the best interests of the game, supporters, players, broadcasters and sponsors". Baron said: "We can now move ahead, work with the committee and enjoy an excellent championship."

The Welsh, Irish and Scottish unions also expressed their pleasure that the championship will go ahead as planned on February 6. England's opening match is against Scotland at Twickenham on February 20.

Hosié said: "I'm delighted that we are all party to the accord. The Five Nations Cham-

Lloyds TSB

five nations

Championship

Road to failure.....41
Loose Talk.....41

the bottom line remains that the RFU has shown a remarkable capacity in recent times for confrontation that has blighted relations with the other home unions.

The fact that, when pressure was exerted, England buckled asks the question why they could not have fallen into line a day earlier. The reason for that emerged yesterday, and possibly places a question mark against the relationship between Baister and Baron.

It is now clear that England had been ready to give the ne-

cessary assurances on Monday afternoon, but a sequence of events which suggest a "cock-up" rather than a conspiracy prevented them from doing so.

In a telephone conversation with Hosié, Baister assured the former international referee that England would back the accord without condition, yet, at the same time, Richard Prescott, the RFU media relations manager, was authorised to release a press statement that referred to the same conditions regarding French television contracts and Italy's future participation, which had so incensed the Five Nations Committee. Hosié wondered what was going on, concluded the worst and expelled England.

There are hawks on the RFU Council who would rather that England had not backed down, but for all the posturing it was inconceivable, if only for financial reasons, that the championship would proceed without their involvement. The stance of Lloyds TSB may also have proved critical. It was made clear to Roger Pickering, the chief executive of the Five Nations, at a meeting in London yesterday that unless the impasse was broken, the bank would review — its £12 million, three-year sponsorship deal that also takes in the World Cup. "Without England the value is reduced substantially," a spokesman said.

The climbdown was announced at 4pm after Baister had landed in Glasgow at 1.30pm and linked with Beaumont, who had driven from Lancashire, for a "conciliatory pint and a chat" with Hosié. They met as questions were being asked in the House of Commons about the chaotic nature of English rugby administration.

"The men who control English rugby have egos ten times bigger than a player's joystick," Denis MacShane, the Labour MP for Rotherham, said. "They are betraying the interests of the average fan."



Gough is congratulated on a job well done by his captain, Stewart, after reducing Sri Lanka to 21 for four with a bristling burst of top-class bowling.

Inspired Gough strikes vital blows

FROM MICHAEL HENDERSON IN MELBOURNE

MELBOURNE (Sri Lanka won Test England beat Sri Lanka by seven wickets)

ENGLAND needed fewer than 15 overs to put this match in the bag and record their fourth win out of five in the triangular tournament. By the time Darren Gough retired from the attack, after bowling a superb new-ball spell that brought four good wickets, they had knocked the stuffing out of Sri Lanka. Ranatunga played nobly for his 76 but his bowlers could not defend a total of 186.

It was Ranatunga's first half-century against England in 14 one-day internationals, a peculiarly thin record for so good a player. The portly skipper, "Captain Cool", shuffled up and down the pitch in that deceptively languid manner and rebuilt his team's innings from the ruins of 21 for four. He found support from Chandana, who made 50. The rest was a mess.

Hick, maintaining the form that he found in Sydney last Sunday, batted England through to victory with an undefeated 66 after the openers had fallen to successive balls from Zoya, an over apart. Ranatunga missed him at extra cover on 13, just as Steve Waugh had failed to accept a chance in Sydney when he

was 23. In this mood, it is best to get rid of Hick before he settles. Once he had done so, he played very well. Crawley, taking the place of Fairbrother, who has an injured shoulder, was his partner in the closing stages after Hussain, trying to master Muralitharan, was stumped on the charge. England could afford to pace their reply at a leisurely rate, so well had their bowlers performed earlier in the day.

Gough was outstanding. As he comes towards the end of a long tour, on which he has been England's most notable performer, he is bowling better than he can ever have done. Proud, committed and — most important — fully fit, he looks a world-class fast bowler. In game after game he is carrying England's banner.

In his opening burst here, helped by a lively pitch, he looked a terrific sight. He

ripped out Sri Lanka's powerful top order by taking four wickets for five runs in 21 balls, figures that told no trace of a fib. His first wicket was the best, because the world known Jayasuriya, to be a cracking batsman, Gough offered him no room to smash through cover, as he likes, and he got increasingly agitated at his lack of progress. When he drove to Hussain at backward point, one of two men placed

within ten yards of each other for such a stroke, he had made one run from 17 balls.

Little Kaluwitharana, the rich of an opener, was bowled by one that nipped back a shade as he tried to attack it. That also was the stroke of a frustrated batsman. Alampinn, who is no slouch, edged a forcing stroke of no distinction to second slip, where Hick made a sharp catch look easy. When he defeated Tilakaratne, Gough had a fourth success. It was splendid stuff.

Ranatunga and Chandana gave the colourful Sri Lankan contingent something to cheer as they shared 92 runs for the sixth wicket.

The flags were unfurled and there was plenty of good-natured noise from the lower slopes of the enormous southern stand, just the other side of the road from Melbourne Park, where the tennis players were entertaining another record crowd at the Australian Open.

Whatever sting the match had in those early stages had been drawn by the time Crawley joined Hick to score the last 70 runs. Sri Lanka have now lost all three games in this competition. Should they lose in Hobart tomorrow and England beat them in Adelaide on Saturday, they will have travelled in vain.

SCOREBOARD FROM MELBOURNE

SRI LANKA
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ENGLAND
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TOURNAMENT DETAILS: Jan 16: England beat Australia by 7 runs (Twickenham, London). Jan 17: England beat Sri Lanka by 6 wickets (Twickenham, London). Jan 18: Australia beat England by 8 wickets (Melbourne). Jan 19: England beat Australia by 7 runs (Sydney).
ENGLAND: P W L F
Australia 4 2 2 4
Sri Lanka 3 0 3 0
OVERS AND MATCHES TO COME: Jan 20: Sri Lanka (Australia); Jan 21: Australia (England); Jan 22: Sri Lanka (Australia); Jan 23: Sri Lanka (Australia); Jan 24: Sri Lanka (Australia); Jan 25: Sri Lanka (Australia); Jan 26: Sri Lanka (Australia); Jan 27: Sri Lanka (Australia); Jan 28: Sri Lanka (Australia); Jan 29: Sri Lanka (Australia); Jan 30: Sri Lanka (Australia); Jan 31: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 1: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 2: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 3: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 4: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 5: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 6: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 7: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 8: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 9: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 10: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 11: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 12: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 13: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 14: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 15: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 16: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 17: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 18: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 19: Sri Lanka (Australia); Feb 20: Sri Lanka (Australia); 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